

# THE IRRAWADDI

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## THE GITANA.

*Expressly translated for the IRRAWADDI from the French of Xavier de Montepin.*

Eleven o'clock had just struck and a slight rain was falling. Silence reigned everywhere. The only light along the quay was that of the parrot vender's little shop.

That night while the Gitano was pouring his love into the Norman woman's ear, five men were hidden in a narrow lane not more than twenty paces from her house.

Another hour passed. Midnight was about to strike. The buxom Norman woman was already yawning and rubbing her tired eyelids. Morales, taking the hint that it was time to retire, seized the hand of his massive and mature idol, slipped a ring through one of its fingers, covered it with kisses and then took his leave.

He followed the side walk directly in the direction of the men lying in ambush.

A low whistle was heard. Four vigorous fellows rushed upon Morales and seized him by the arm and shoulder.

The Gitano was about to raise an outcry, when the point of a sharp stiletto was applied to his neck and a shrill voice whispered in his ear: "If you utter a word, you are a dead man."

The Spaniard trembled in all his limbs.

"Forward," hissed the leader of the band.

The four sailors advanced, dragging their victim with them.

When they reached the parapet of the quay, Morales muttered: "I shall be drowned," but his lamentations were again summarily stopped by the keen stiletto point.

The tide had risen to its full and almost overflowed the embankment.

A boat, manned by two sailors, and tied to an iron ring, balanced quietly within a few feet of the parapet.

Not a word was spoken, but the Gitano, raised up by the shoulders, was hurled into space and fell heavily in the bottom of the boat.

All the men then got on board, and for half an hour nothing was heard save the cadenced stroke of the oars. The boat finally reached the little coaster, which was at anchor in the offing.

Morales, more dead than alive, was hoisted on her deck and all the rest of the boat's crew followed.

The Gitano lay for a considerable time a prey to the most distressing reflections, and was only roused therefrom by a sailor striking him on the shoulder and summoning him down into the cabin of the commanding officer.

A lantern, hanging from the ceiling, shed a sufficient light through the apartment and Morales, almost fainting with surprise and terror, on finding himself in the presence of Tancred and Quirino.

"Mercy!" he exclaimed, falling on his knees; mercy, in the name of all the saints of Spain."

"Get up, you rascal," said M. de Najac, "and remember that your life is entirely in your own hands."

These words afforded a ray of hope.

The Gitano understood this and rising rapidly, muttered:

"What must I do? I am ready for everything."

"You must answer me the truth, all the truth and nothing but the truth."

"Question me, sir, question me."

"What has become of Carmen?"

Morales reflected for the twentieth part of a second.

"Carmen is in Brittany," he thought. "If I tell the truth I am ruined. Let us try a little lying."

Then addressing Tancred:

"Are you not aware of the shipwreck of the 'Marsouin'?" The unhappy Carmen was then drowned in the flower of her age. She loved you very tenderly, and on learning your death, had no further desire to live."

"Then only two persons escaped from that wreck,—Annunziata Rovero and yourself?"

"Yes, sir, only we two."

"You are quite certain of this?"

"Quite certain, alas."

"You have nothing else to say?"

"Not a word."

The officer made a sign to Quirino. The Indian produced his little silver whistle and blew

upon it, bringing down the quarter-master without delay, into the cabin.

"Roch," said Tancred, "you will attach a pulley and rope to the yard arm."

"For a manoeuvre, commander?"

"For an execution. We have some one to hang here."

"Very well, commander."

"Have all ready in three minutes."

"Tell me the truth."

"I will tell the truth. I swear it all by the saints."

"Hurry then, you have only one minute left."

"Question me; I will answer," said the Gitano in a faint voice.

"Is Carmen alive or dead?"

"She is alive."



"MORALES' ESCAPE."

"Yes, sir."

The quarter-master took his departure. The teeth of Morales clattered and his legs could not uphold the weight of his body. He reeled like a drunken man.

"Mercy, sir," he exclaimed. "What are you going to do with me?"

"Justice! Come say your prayers. You have only three minutes to live."

"Have pity on me. Do not kill me. I do not want to die. Tell me what you want, what I must do."

"Under the name of Annunziata Rovero and as lawful wife of Oliver Le Vaillant, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

Tancred and Quirino exchanged looks.

Then the former said to Morales:

"Tell us everything that has occurred since the wreck of the 'Marsouin' up to the present time. Enter into the minutest details, we will listen to you all night, if necessary. Remember, this is the only condition on which you can save your life."

(To be continued.)

### THE LILY SLEEPS.

The lily sleeps; whose scented breath  
Floated like music down the gale;  
The woodbine wove a twisted wreath,  
But found her arts of no avail.  
Through all the day the wood-dove spoke,  
In thrilling accents softly low,  
No other sound the echoes woke  
Within the woodlands' sylvan show.

The lily sleeps; her beauty pale  
Exhausted by the glaring day,  
Dreamlike and still, can yet prevail  
To woo the slanting moonbeam's ray.  
In dewy glades, unseen by man,  
The fairies meet in revel rout,  
Fresh blooms the patient rose's plan,  
The glowworms' lanterns glimmer out.

The lily sleeps; nor hears the song  
Which palpitates in heavenly chords,  
From Philomela's bosom wrung,  
A poem unexpressed by words.  
The lily sleeps; in hushed repose  
A lovely vision purely fair,  
And Nature, wise for ever, knows  
The secret of her beauty rare.

### THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

I.

A cold clear day, with the wintry sun glittering on the frosted hedgerows and on the light snow lying upon the highway after the fall of last night, along which the rumbling Calthorpe omnibus left the track of its rolling wheels.

It was the afternoon of Christmas eve, Christmas eve two years ago, when the omnibus which plied daily to and from Calthorpe and the Malston railway station, came rattling along the road leading to Calthorpe village, with much clatter of hoofs and jingling of harness; it being an idea of the honest countryman who drove the half-trained team, that the more noise he made with horse and harness the more imposing became the effect of his approach. So the omnibus came clattering on within a mile of Calthorpe, when it pulled up with a suddenness which almost flung the horses on their haunches, while the driver shouted out:

"The gentleman as was for the Oak farm gets out here," adding as a good-looking young fellow, with pleasant blue eyes, and curly chestnut hair, descending from the crazy old conveyance with a portmanteau in his hand, "if ye get over the stile there, and cut across the fields to your left, you're all right for the farm."

The young man answered by a nod, and the omnibus rolled on, leaving him standing on the highway, with his luggage at his feet.

"He's London bred, I s'pose," the driver observed in the ear of a passenger who shared the front seat with him, "and the town life has made him too conceited to carry his own box,"—the word "box" describing Will Drayton's leather portmanteau.

But Drayton, untouched by and unconscious of the driver's contemptuous whisper and look back, stood in the open road in the teeth of a cutting north wind, waiting till chance threw some one in his way willing to carry the luggage to his aunt's farm-house, which he was too proud to shoulder and trudge under himself.

Presently a lad came along the highway, singing some lusty melody as he tramped upon his way, who was glad enough to break the thread of his song and carry Will Drayton's chattels, for sake of the reward promised at his journey's end.

"The old way is open yet, by Mason's field, an' over the stile through the coppice meadows?" Drayton said, as the lad lifted his portmanteau from the ground.



The boy nodded, and walked on in silence through the turnstile, and across the field-path, until his curiosity overcoming his shyness he hazarded at last.

"You've been here before, I s'pose, mister?" Drayton laughed.

"Yes, I've been here before, no doubt," he said, "seeing I was born down yonder at the Mill. But when my father died and the place was sold, I went Lunnun ways, to see if I could make my fortune."

The boy looked in swift surprise at the young man beside him, who after all was only the son of old Drayton of the Mill, who had died a bankrupt, and left his son a legacy to his brother, the husband of the widowed mistress of the Oak farm. Still, despite the memory of his father's ruin, the lad's glance went wavering from the glittering watch-chain suspended from Drayton's waistcoat-pocket to the gloves upon his hands and the fine cloth he wore in his coat; the which this clumsy country lad had never seen the like on any one, beneath the rank of the Calthorpe gentry, while he conjectured inwardly that Drayton must have made the fortune he went to London to win.

"You're come down for the wedding, maybe?" the lad suggested presently when, his wonder having had time to cool, a sudden surmise struck him that all Drayton's fine dressing could not be for ordinary holiday.

"What wedding?" Drayton asked, while the gate leading into the yard of the Oak farm, wherein hens, and ducks, and cackling geese were straying freely.

"They say Nellie Drayton's going to marry my lord's head keeper," the lad said, impressively, delighted that his gossip had taken his hearer by surprise.

"Why Nellie was but a mite when I left her, nine years ago," Drayton responded doubtfully.

"She's four years older nor me," the boy said sturdily, as though those four years were ten.

"That's a great age, youngster," Drayton laughed, slipping a shilling into the lad's hand, which inspired him with a still stronger respect for Drayton's riches, and the dim and distant glories of London, where fortunes could be made so readily.

Then they were at the farm-house door, where the portmanteau was deposited with a thud, which brought a girl's face to the window, a face with bonnie eyes of blue, the shade of Willie's own, and a cloud of light hair profuse and soft, drawn off from a rosy cheek and a forehead of snowy white.

"That is not Nell, but Jessie," Willie thought as the girl withdrew her face from the window. "She has got the golden hair, and the laughing lips and eyes of long ago, when we went nutting together in the wood, and wading after stickle-backs in the stream."

"Mother, there's someone at the door, and I think it's cousin Willie," Jessie Drayton cried from within; and before Willie had time to push the door open for himself, it was flung wide, and Mrs. Drayton was welcoming him back to Calthorpe.

"Only for Jess, I wouldn't have knowed you, Willie, you're grown so tall and big, and so like a town gentleman," Mrs. Drayton exclaimed, looking proudly up at her nephew, who had changed from a slim lad, into a tall fine-looking young man, during his nine years of London life. "I've got old and stiff while you've been away lad, and the girls have grown into women; and, I suppose, you wouldn't have knowed any of us, only you seen us in the old place."

To which Willie protested he would have known them anywhere, while he kissed his cousins' flushing cheeks, and the younger one looked shyly out of her mellow brown eyes, to see how one of the group in the farm-house kitchen, not of their kith and kin, bore the friendly greeting; but my lord's head keeper never looked up from the contemplation of his strong brown hands to see the kisses given, or to mark the flush which the touch of Drayton's lips brought to Nellie's cheek.

She was the prettiest of the two girls, this younger one, of whom my lord's head keeper was said to be enamoured. Jessie was a comely country lass, fair-haired and rosy-cheeked; but Nellie's cheek was rounder and more delicately tinted, and her eyes, less laughing than the blue eyes of Jessie, were of a mellow changed brown; so that Drayton, sitting in the old farm kitchen, and watching the faces of the two girls lighted up by the glow of the warm wood fire, silently endorsed Mark Wilton's taste in choosing the delicate prettiness of Nellie, rather than the buxom comeliness of her elder sister, while sweet Nellie Drayton forgot for the moment the quiet lover sitting by the ingle nook, in the wandering contemplation of Willie's glittering chain, the ring upon his finger, and the gloves he had flung carelessly down upon the table.

"So, as ye telled me in your letter, your master's dead, and ye must look for another place," Mrs. Drayton observed, meditatively, while Willie refreshed himself with meat and ale after his journey. "But then, I suppose, a good place isn't easy found, Willie?"

"I'll take a fling out of myself before I try," he answered, putting away his plate; "but I'll not find it hard to suit myself, I've got such a good character."

Here, with shy politeness, the keeper rose up and went out, feeling he had no business to listen to Willie's concerns. Half-way to the gate he turned, and glanced back to see if Nellie would steal after him for a farewell, but Nellie only smiled and nodded to the look, and Mark Wilton passed through the gate alone, clanging it after him.

## II

The snow which had fallen lightly all the past night, and left its thin white coating on field and highway, began drifting again as Mark Wilton crossed the coppice meadows on his way to the keeper's lodge, dropping down at first softly and slowly, but changing as the short day closed in, to swift short flakes, which went on falling all the night through, and when Christmas morning broke, a thick white sheet of snow lay over the earth, on which the sun shone with a cold frosty glitter.

In the Oak-farm kitchen, a strong wood fire blazed upon the hearth, where Jessie Drayton stood with her dress pinned up, frying slices of bacon, when Willie came down in search of breakfast. She looked up from her work as he came in, with a laughing face, to which the fire had brought a bright, hot flush, and wished him a merry Christmas.

"A merry Christmas to you too, Jess, and a happy new year," Willie answered in response, and going over to where she stood, he stooped downwards and kissed her. "I have brought a new gown for my aunt, and a Christmas-box for you and Nellie, Jess," he said, standing by her on the hearth.

Then, as Nellie's footstep sounded along the passage, he took a parcel wrapped in silver paper from his pocket, and drawing out of it a pair of glittering bracelets, held them up before Jessie's surprised eyes, who snatching up the hissing pan from the fire, reached out her hand for the young man's showy gift.

"It was good of you to think upon us, Willie," she said with a grateful smile on her full ripe lips, while she turned the bracelets round and round in her hand, without attempting to draw them on her wrist. "Only I'm thinking they're too fine for working girls like me or Nellie. So if the man you got them from would take them back, and give us a nice dress or the like—"

But Willie interrupted her with a laugh. "Jess, girl," he said, "jewellers don't sell dresses."

"They do down this way," Jessie persisted, still with an admiring eye on the bracelets, despite their uselessness. "There's a man goes through here once a fortnight with rings and brooches, and dresses too of all sorts."

"Ay, Brummagem jewellery!" Willie said contemptuously, a trifle nettled at his cousin's questioning acceptance of his gift.

"Well," she said, with a smile on her bonnie honest face, "I'll no scorn your present, Willie, but I'll look it up, and keep it to wear at Nellie's wedding."

Drayton laughed, but though he laughed, he felt his face flame hotly, as he followed the girl's smiling glance to where Nellie stood in the open doorway, watching the little scene between the cousins.

"You had best keep them for your own wedding," Nellie retorted, as she passed through the door, with a pout on her scarlet lips.

But Jessie only laughed, and said she had no chance of a wedding yet; while Nellie, with the pout upon her lip changing into smiles, held out her hand for Willie's offered present.

## III.

Willie and the two girls walked together that day to Calthorpe Church by the road, as the snow lay too thickly on the meadow-path to allow of their taking the shorter route.

Coming out after service, they found stalwart Mark Wilton waiting for them in the churchyard, dressed in his homely Sunday best. He was to dine that day at the Oak farm by special invitation, and having joined the Draytons in the churchyard, he walked back to the farm with Nellie, taking his place at her side with a silent assumption of ownership, which made Will Drayton feel a trifle sulky; not that it had aught to do with him, as he told himself while he went with Jessie down the path leading to the church gates, only the girl was too dainty and pretty for such a rough giant as my lord's head keeper.

In honor of Christmas, dinner was served that day in the farm parlor, in place of the kitchen where the family dined on ordinary occasions; and at dinner Wilton took his place by Nellie again, with the same air of ownership as had offended Willie on their way home from church.

"I suppose it's settled Wilton is to have Nellie for a wife, aunt?" Willie hazarded, when he and Jessie and Mrs. Drayton had come out after dinner into the kitchen: leaving Nellie and her lover sitting by the parlor fire.

"Yes, I suppose he is. They've settled it between them, and I'm content," Mrs. Drayton said quietly.

Something in Willie's voice when he asked the question, made Jessie look sharply up at him, and then glance away again into the fire: but nothing more was said on either side, and the talk drifted away to other things.

Late in the afternoon, when the Draytons were sitting down to tea, Tom Churton, an old Calthorpe friend of Willie's, dropped in to have a chat with him; and when Churton rose to leave, Willie volunteered to walk back with him to the village, whispering to Jessie as he followed Churton out, that he would be back to say good-night to Mark before he left the farm. But when they reached Calthorpe, instead of letting him return as he meant to do when he started, Willie was induced by his companion to come into the bar of Calthorpe Inn, and have something hot before walking back to the farm through the darkness and the driving snow which had begun to fall again. Talking in the lighted bar, and drinking his brandy and water, so beguiled Will Drayton into forgetfulness, that

eleven o'clock had struck before he entered the yard gate of the Oak farm again, and saw to his dismay that all the lights in the house were out, and only a glimmering blaze from the kitchen fire gave a hope that any of the family were astir.

He knocked softly at the door, which was unbolted and opened as softly by Nellie Drayton, who crept back instantly within the warm circle of the fire.

Willie fastened the door behind him, and then taking off his hat, shook the white snow from it as he neared the hearth, where Nellie stood, looking silently down upon the blazing embers, while the glow of the burning wood shone on the silken glossiness of her hair, and lighted up the subtle softness of her eyes.

She turned to him as he approached with a little smiling nod, but her lips said nothing.

"So you are all alone, Nellie?" Willie began by way of breaking ground; for Nellie's little nod had a coy reticence in it, which lured Drayton more fatally than a freer welcome. "Where is my aunt and Jessie?"

Out of the mellow brown eyes shot a glance half smiling, half laughing, as he answered with demure gravity.

"They're gone to bed an hour ago; so if you want Jess, you won't be like to see her till tomorrow."

"But I don't particularly want Jess, Nellie."

She gave her head a coquettish little toss. "How am I to understand your London ways of asking for people you don't want?" she said, looking away from Drayton's face into the fire.

There for a moment in the silence of the leaping firelight the two stood wordless, until Nellie raising her hand to brush the hair back from her forehead, the glitter of a golden bracelet on her uplifted wrist struck on the young man's delighted eyes.

"You're a brave little cousin, Nellie," Willie cried eagerly, "to wear my gift on your arm, instead of locking it in a box like Jessie."

Nellie's eyes fell on the gleaming bracelet on her left arm, and she half laughingly covered it with her right hand.

"I only wore one to-night," she said primly, half inclined to make play for herself with the young man's eagerness, yet half abashed and touched by it, "just to show it to a friend."

"Your friend was Mark Wilton, Nell," Willie suggested. "What might Mark have said, if it's a fair question?"

To this Nellie, twining the bracelet round, and looking at it wistfully, out of her drooped eyes, answered slowly.

"He said it was foolish finery for such as me, who was to be a working man's wife."

Was it the witchery of the purple firelight, or the girl's eyes, or her wistful downward look upon her present, which made Will Drayton blurt out unguardedly—

"Only say a word, Nell, and there will be no need for you to be a working man's wife."

But Nellie either did not or would not see the drift of her cousin's rash remark, and went on demurely:

"So Mark bid me give you your pretty present back; and tell you it was too grand for a poor girl."

Willie's face flushed red. "And do you mean to say you'll do it?" he asked sharply.

The downward eyes glanced upwards to his face.

"No, I said I wouldn't because though your present was too good for me, I'd wear it now and again for sake of the kindness that made you give it."

"Even when you are Mark's wife?"

And when Willie put the question the soft eyes wavered in their glance, and a flush came to her cheek.

"Mother and Jessie like Mark," she said in guileful evasion. "He's steady and careful, and has some money put by, so they talk of his leaving my lord, and taking a farm and—"

Her confidence stammered and halted now, and Willie filled up her sentence.

"Marrying you and settling down in a home."

"Something like that, Willie; only I'm young yet, and it's time enow to think about it."

"And if another man came for you that my aunt and Jess liked as well as Mark, what would you do then, Nellie?"

But Nellie instead of answering, looked from his eager eyes back again to the glowing wood fire.

"What would you do, Nellie?" he urged. "There, I hear Jessie calling," she cried; "she'll say I'm a silly lass to stand here talking instead of going to bed."

She slid by him into the passage leading to the stairs, but he followed her swiftly, and caught her hands.

"You never kissed me for my present, Nell," he said. "Will you kiss me now and say good-night?"

She drew her hands from his and pushed him from her, in half-laughing denial.

"How dare you be so bold, Willie?" she cried, and then with fleet foot she fled upstairs to the shelter of her room.

## IV.

December drifted into January, and still Willie Drayton said never a word of going back to London, seeming but too content to spend his time in the society of his cousin Nellie. Only her mother and Jess, he kept telling himself, were on Mark Wilton's side; he had no part or

concern in Nellie's unbiassed affections. So, when the day's work was done, he sat by her in the glowing fire light talking of London, until the girl's head grew dazzled with the notion that to be the wife of Willie Drayton, and live in the great city where she might wear gold bracelets, and display a showy silk without word of comment, was to be almost, if not quite, a lady.

It was one thing to be the head keeper's wife, whom everyone called Mark, if they did not call him Wilton; but it was another thing to marry her cousin whom people always called Mr. Drayton, not daring to make too free with so well-dressed and prosperous a gentleman.

Nellie's foolish head went round in those days, when she dreamt dreams and saw visions, in a way she marvelled at later, when the glamour had faded.

She liked Willie's blue eyes and chestnut hair, his comely face and his town-bred ways, better than the homely, honest lover who had nothing in common with Willie's dandyism and fine clothes and gold watch-chain, all of which were so many snares in the way of foolish Nellie Drayton.

At first Nellie's flirtation was kept out of Wilton's ken, who came and went as usual, and from whom she stole moments to be given, when he was gone, to Willie Drayton. But as her zest for Willie's society strengthened, she grew careless and saucy to her old lover, and leaving him with her mother and Jessie for company boldly went out of doors with her cousin, and in the short winter gloaming, while the clasp of the old love was warm on her hand, yielded her lips to the kisses of the new.

"Nellie's only a bit dazed with Willie's talk about London," Mrs. Drayton would say excusingly, when she saw Wilton's look darken or his brow lower at Nellie's open defection.

But Wilton would answer never a word of complaint or reproach to mother or sister of the girl he loved so well. Only, as time went on, and Nellie grew more heedless of his silent patience, or his silent pain, he began coming less frequently to the Oak farm, a proceeding which very much disconcerted Miss Nellie, who was well-pleased to sit as queen between her two admirers.

"You're like to lose a good man with your giddy-headed nonsense, and I don't believe you care a pin for Will Drayton," Jessie said to her, warningly. "It's only the folly of gold bracelets, and foolish bits of ribbon in your hair, that's lifting you off your feet."

For Nellie, not daring to wear Willie's bracelets every day, had taken instead to tie up her pretty brown hair with ribbons of blue and ribbons of scarlet, that Willie bought in the village for her adornment, and to which vanity of the flesh Jessie scornfully alluded. Whereupon Nellie laughed saucily, and told Jessie she liked Willie better than she liked Mark, to which Jessie impolitely responded that if she did she was a greater silly than she took her for.

"Maybe you'll take Mark yourself, when I'm gone up to London to be a lady?" Nellie suggested in reprisal.

"A lady!" Jessie echoed in pitying derision. "A fine lady you'll be in a London lodging, living on Will Drayton's weekly wages, which, it's my opinion, he can spend the bulk of on himself without a wife."

Upon which Nellie walked out of the kitchen to the dairy, with her head in the air, full of the flattering notion that Jessie was jealous of her coming good fortune. But when the cream was churned, and her deft little hands were busy with the butter, the memory of the old honest love, on which she had leant from childhood, came back to her regretfully, and stood beside the gilded shadow of a passion less real and less true.

Yet, when evening came, and she strolled into the farm kitchen after a walk with Willie Drayton, wearing Willie's ribbons in her hair, and a knot of Willie's buying at her throat, the flitting regret had vanished, and the light of the new love shining in her mellow eyes of brown had killed the light of the old.

As January closed in, Mark Wilton's dropping visits to the farm had ceased totally. At first Mrs. Drayton bemoaned his absence with Jessie, but grew reconciled, when she saw Nellie so taken up with her new lover and the notion of the fine-lady life she was to lead in London, when she was to have nothing to do, only to dress and go out with Willie when his day's work was over. Drayton had no true appreciation of the pleasures of home, and filled Nellie's head with the idea of theatres, and Christy Minstrels, and summer afternoons at Kew or Richmond, never pausing to think that the salary he usually spent on his personal enjoyment, might not afford the same delightful recreations to two.

Looking at Willie's picture of their town life, in its gilded setting, one cold February afternoon, while he was absent in the village, and her hands were busy washing up the cups after their early tea, Nellie was startled out of her day-dream by a shadow falling athwart the open doorway. Glancing up she saw the stalwart figure of Mark Wilton entering the kitchen, carrying his gun in his hand, and bending his head as she had seen him bend it many a time under the low old-fashioned entrance. The scarlet blood flew hot to Nellie's cheek.

"You frightened me with that gun, Mark," she said, in excuse for the tide which would not be stayed, although the small plump hands, busy amongst the teacups, never faltered in their work.

"There's no need to be frightened," he said, "it's not loaded; though for all that I shouldn't



have brought it here, but I carry it about with me for company like, because it's the only company I've got now."

There was a world of reproach in his voice, a world of pathos in the simple sentence, to which he added no word, but ground his gun upon the floor, and clasping his strong brown hands over the muzzle, stood looking into the girl's face silently.

"Mother and Jessie are gone a-milking," Nellie said, forcing herself to say something, and looking down at a teacup she held in her fingers, rather than into the eyes fixed on her across the brown hands clasped upon the gun.

"I just came to have a word with you, Nellie," Wilton said, not noticing her remark about her mother and Jessie. "And if you don't mind listening to me a minute, I'd like to say it here."

She made no answer, and Mark, lifting his large hands away from the muzzle of the gun, laid it in the corner of the kitchen.

There was not much romance about Mark Wilton, nor any show of sentiment; yet what he had to say to Nellie he wished to say there, in the crimson glow of the firelight, where he had told her of his love nearly a year ago. "Where it began, let it end," he said to himself. Then he crossed the kitchen, and standing before Nellie on the hearth, he spoke.

"They be talking down the village about your marrying Will Drayton, and I just came up to hear the truth of it, Nellie, from your own lips."

But with scarlet cheek, and drooping eye, Nellie stood still without answering him.

"Silence is the same as words sometimes," Mark proceeded after a moment; "and all I have to say now, Nell, my lass, is, that if you are going to marry Will Drayton, and want the promise you made me back, I'm here to give it to you."

"There's no hurry about it, Mark, Nellie said nervously, "and—and—I'd rather you'd speak to mother."

"Your mother has never come between us two yet, and she won't now," Mark answered with quiet decision. "But Nell, my girl, if so be you want your promise, take it to-night, for maybe when the time comes when you do want it, I mightn't be here to give it."

Nellie felt startled although she made no sign, but stood with her head drooped, and her eyes wandering from the scattered tea-things on the table to the flitting gleams of the fire.

"You see I thought there was no use staying in these parts any longer," he went on. "I got to dislike the place when I stopped coming up here, so I gave my lord notice a month ago, and as a brother of mine has a farm in Gloucestershire, and I mean to turn farmer too, I thought I might as well shift for good, and I'm going down there to-morrow, to see if I can find a farm near his."

"You've been so far away from us this month back, Gloucestershire won't be much farther," Nellie answered, with a coolness which struck Mark sorely; but he only said,

"I thought if you wanted me any nearer, you'd have sent for me, Nellie."

"The man who goes away of himself is not worth sending for," Nellie retorted, taking, with a woman's ready tact, the part of the injured and deserted.

"Nellie, it's not fair to say words like them, when you know I went because I didn't want to stand in the way of a man you liked better nor you liked me. And I thought to myself, if it's only a girl's fancy and pride she has out of him, as Jessie says it is, why she'll tell me to come back; but I never had a word, nor a look, so I made up my mind to go clear away; and as you were only a child, Nell, when you gave me your word first, I thought I'd ask you before I went, if you'd wish it back again."

But the half-stilled passion, or the deep pathos of Wilton's words, struck no answering chord in Nellie. She was waxing angry now, angry with herself, while she thought she was angry with Mark.

"You say right when you tell me I was a child a year ago, when I said I would be your wife," she cried, a light flashing into her usually mellow eyes; "but I'm a woman to-night, and I'll take my promise back."

"Nell, my lass, don't let our last words be words of anger," he said. "I'm not like to see you any more after to-night, for I'd never wish to look upon your face when you were another man's wife. But you might just let me kiss you once before I go; once, for sake of the time that can come no more."

He came nearer to her while he spoke, nearer yet, and the ruddy gleams of the fire were lighting up the two figures standing on the hearth, when Nellie, bowed a little, and softened, turned her face to his—her cheek, but not her lips—and then, without spoken word, she slid away from the kitchen, and along her passage to her room, as though she kiss itself was the seal of their farewell.

It was close upon eight o'clock when Wilton left the Oak farm kitchen that night, where he had sat alone after Nellie left him, waiting to say farewell to Jessie and Mrs. Drayton, when they came in from milking, and to give them a last hand-shake before he went to where their lives and his should lie apart for ever.

As he passed from the house porch, he paused a moment to take a last, lingering look at Nellie's window, wondering to himself if she watched his going; or was she sitting up yonder waiting for Will Drayton to come back from Calthorpe? when from the shadow of the porch a hand stole out and touched his shoulder timorously.

The touch made him turn, and as he turned he saw looking upwards at him, out of the shadowy darkness of the night, the small winsome face of Nellie Drayton.

"Mark, would you stay in Calthorpe if I asked you?" she said with a quivering lip, and tears trembling in her mellow eyes.

He answered no word, but for all answer took her to him and kissed her, while her clinging arms wound themselves round his neck.

"And if you will," she whispered, "I'll give back the promise I took away to-night; for Jess was right, Mark and the old love is stronger than the new."

#### LOVE'S EXCHANGE.

"O give me your heart, dearest Nelly," said I, As we strolled by the smooth-flowing river—  
"O give me your heart, or I'm sure I shall die, And remorse will possess you for ever!"

"Not a bird on the tree but a partner hath found;  
Ev'ry rose hath a bee to caress her;  
Not a 'she' that can walk, creep, or crawl on the ground,  
But hath some fellow-being to bless her."

"Then why should you pine in the world all alone,  
And despise the fond teachings of Nature?  
O give me your heart, and for once let it own  
True Love for its guide, friend, and teacher!"

"Dear me!" said the maid, 'twixt a smile and a tear,  
"I'd be ruthless to slay such a lover.  
Take my heart, then; but pray let the bargain be clear—  
It is yours—in exchange for another!"

#### ALTON COURT; A STORY OF AN OLD ENGLISH MANOR HOUSE.

[The main features of the following story are facts, which, several years ago, came within the knowledge of the writer, who, however, has changed names, and altered the real narrative in one or two unimportant particulars, so as to avoid a pointed identification with the locality and family in which the tragic occurrence, here truly related, took place.]

"I am very glad, I was not on the inquest," said my father; "but it is no business of mine, and perhaps, I had better keep my misgivings to myself."

My father was a prudent man, and so far independent that if his duty came in his way, he would do it; but would not go out of his way to look for it; and he rather congratulated himself on being out of the way when the coroner empanelled his jury; for had he been one of the twelve, it is probable he would not have fallen in so readily as the others with the verdict of "justifiable homicide" returned by the direction of the coroner, on the occasion of the death of the young artist, Collins, who met with his sad end, as it was alleged, by a fall down the back staircase of Alton Court the night previous.

It was a strange, queer, suspicious story, this of the poor artist's death.

Alton Court was the old residence of an old family in Gloucestershire, some miles from Bristol. The Elangs had inhabited it almost from the time of the latter Tudors. The ancient race was represented at the time of the story which I am about to relate, by four members—the Elangs, father and mother, and a son and daughter. It was a great old rambling house on the bend of a river, with heavily-wooded banks. The son was some three or four and twenty years of age when the catastrophe occurred—a dark, proud, overbearing young man. For his sister, who was some years his junior, a governess, a highly accomplished young lady, and of elegant prepossessing manners, had been engaged, and was an inmate of the family more than eighteen months at the time of the so-called accident. There could be little doubt that the son, Reginald, was by no means indifferent to the governess, Miss Walton, but whether it was that his overtures were of a nature she could not listen to, or that her heart was already engaged, she rejected his advances, and listened with more interest to the suit of a handsome young artist, who visited Alton Court twice a week, to give her young pupil lessons in drawing. The old people were, perhaps, not entirely ignorant of the little affair between the governess and young Collins, and did not discourage it, since they probably believed it a safeguard against what, in their family pride, they would have considered a mesalliance. Young Elang, however, did not easily bear this interference with his passion, and the artist never crossed his path without receiving some mark of cruel insolence. It would have been well if the young aristocrat had confined himself to these passing signs of dislike, but his jealousy prompted him to keep a closer eye upon the actions of the lovers than either was aware of. In the winter, Miss Walton got leave to visit some friends in Bristol, where the artist resided, and whence he came twice a week to Alton Court. On a dark dull morning, a little wedding party, consisting of four persons, entered one of its many churches, the bride and bridegroom being the artist and the governess, who had made up their

minds to open a school at the close of Miss Walton's engagement at Alton Court, but until the period of her leaving was at hand, they thought it better that the Elangs should not be informed of their union. This, however, like other indiscreet secrets, was the source of sorrow. Reginald Elang, as he said to himself, had kept his eye upon them, and he so contrived to become acquainted with their movements, that when the young people thought there were none but their two friends near them to witness their humble bridal on the dull winter morning in the dingy city church, a figure nearly concealed behind the organ watched the ceremony from the gallery.

Miss Walton returned to Alton Court, and Collins, after Christmas, resumed his professional visits, for the purpose of giving lessons in drawing to her pupil. One wild stormy night, when all but the governess (and as it appeared, Reginald Elang), thought the artist had returned home, a stealthy step moved along the old corridor of Alton Court, and Percy Collins was met by Miss Walton, or rather his own wife, who noiselessly conducted him into a little sitting-room, which was appropriated to her use. Poor young couple! Little did they dream that a malignant eye watched them from the deep shadow at the other end of the corridor. Reginald Elang, with a fell jealousy in his heart, was the witness of this midnight meeting, and he remained on the watch until Collins again came forth into the corridor, and was making his way to a back staircase, from which, by the connivance of one of the servants, who was in their secret, he hoped to have got noiselessly and unobserved away from the house; but passing rapidly through a couple of rooms, Reginald Elang was at the head of the staircase before him, and, as the poor young man approached the spot his treacherous enemy threw himself upon him, and flung him with a savage violence down the stairs. A heavy fall and two or three deep moans, were followed by a cry of "Robbers, robbers!" which Reginald raised the moment he had accomplished his purpose. Whether it was that the servant who was to let the young artist out, had overslept herself, or hearing the scuffle, thought it most prudent not to be in the way, but the only person who appeared on the first alarm was the governess. Her hair streaming on her shoulders, she rushed from her room, and seeing at a glance what had occurred, she threw herself on the insensible body of the artist which lay, his neck broken with the fall, at the bottom of the stairs, and, raised a cry so wild and piercing, that it not only filled the rooms and rambling passages of the old Court, but startled the birds in the rookery outside, and sent them fluttering with wild and unwanted alarm from their nests.

"I crave your pardon Miss Walton," said Reginald, with a stilted expression of countenance, horribly revealed by the dim staircase lamp, "I crave your pardon, I thought it was a robber, but it is only your paramour."

"My husband! fiend and murderer," shrieked the poor young woman, whose bitter outcries had brought the whole household to the spot, amongst them old Elang and his wife. Reginald was ready with his story, and it seemed plausible enough. "Hearing footsteps," he said, "I came from my room, and seeing a man pass stealthily along the corridor in the dead of the night, rushed upon him, and in our struggle he fell down stairs, without discovering who it was until the mischief was done."

"You lie," screamed the distracted wife, "and you know you lie; you dogged him like a murderer, and you murdered him in the hellish jealousy of your heart;" and in her grief and rage the poor thing became frantic and was with difficulty restrained from doing herself and others harm. Old Elang was a magistrate, and sending for the police the matter was placed in their hands till morning, when the coroner, who was a friend of the family, held an inquest, and twelve men were found who had no difficulty in appearing to credit the plausible story of Reginald Elang. "It was a sad business," said the coroner in his charge, "but nothing was more likely than that a gentleman, on hearing footsteps in his father's house at night, after the family had long retired to rest, and seeing a man pass along the corridor should conclude that it was a robber, and act upon the impulse of the moment, as young Mr. Elang had done. It was a sad, sad mistake, but could not be helped, and if the jury viewed the matter in the light that he (the coroner) did, they could come to no other decision than that it was a case of 'justifiable homicide.'"

The jury readily took the hint and gave their verdict accordingly. Nevertheless, whispers went abroad in the neighborhood that there was foul play in the business; and those who knew the sullen and overbearing disposition of Reginald Elang were ready enough to credit the frantic accusation of the poor governess, which the servants, who had overheard them, secretly talked about. It was in allusion to these rumors that my father congratulated himself on being out of the way when the jury was empanelled, as, while he did not wish to make an enemy of the family, he felt he should not have been contented without a more strict investigation than the coroner was willing to encourage. The remains of the unfortunate artist were interred in the burying-ground of the church in which he was married, and his wife was removed, a raging lunatic, to a neighboring asylum, where almost night and day she shrieked out her frenzied maledictions on the head of him whom she declared was the murderer of her husband.

The wealth and influence of a powerful family were sufficient in those days to prevent any

open agitation in such a matter; still people talked in whispers about the foul business, as they termed it, and soon, one by one, the servants at Alton Court left; for noises, they said, were heard at night in the corridor near the back staircase, and on the staircase itself sounds as of a heavy body falling down it. Other servants came and went, scared by the noises, whether fancied or real. It was even said that these midnight sounds were not inaudible to the family themselves, for after remaining a couple of months, as if to give the lie to the floating rumors, they left Alton Court for a while, remaining abroad, in France, until the following winter, the house being in the meantime closed, inhabited during the day by a servant or two, who at night locked it up, and went to sleep at the gate lodge.

However, by the time the Elangs had come back again, public gossip had pretty well tired of the matter, and it was nearly forgotten when fox-hunting commenced. Reginald Elang was a bold and keen rider to hounds, and was amongst the large field of horsemen on the first hunting day of the season. He himself had only returned to the Court the day before, and it was afterwards remembered that the old noises had never been heard with such awful distinctness as during the whole night after his arrival; while the keeper of the lunatic asylum stated that, by some strange and mysterious influence, the poor frenzied governess seemed to have somehow become aware of the return of the author of her husband's death, for all night long she raged most fearfully, and, from the wild words she uttered, appeared to be conscious that Alton Court once more held the object of her maniacal hate.

I remember myself the evening or late afternoon of the following day. About a mile from Alton Court, I saw a chaise approaching from the direction in which the hounds had met in the morning. It was going at a rapid pace, but on coming to the steep hill down which I was riding, the postilion, owing to the abruptness of the ascent, was obliged to walk his horses. This enabled me to look into the chaise as it passed, and I shall not soon forget the spectacle which was presented to my sight. Apparently seated in the carriage and partly supported by a young man who appeared to be a groom, was Reginald Elang, in his red hunting coat, buckskin breeches, and top boots, but his face was the face of a corpse, with a slight scar on the forehead from which the blood had oozed over one ashy cheek. At a glance I could see there was no life in that rigid form and those fixed white features; and there was something fearful in the appearance of the dead man sitting there all immovable, bolt upright, as one would say, in his hunting apparel. The postilion turned on his saddle, shook his head, and muttered, "Heaven has paid him off at last;" then, cracking his whip, as he reached the top of the hill, he put his horses once more into a quick trot, and never slackened his pace until he got to the gates of Alton Court, which were thrown open and the chaise drove up the winding avenue to the front door, when the old butler, coming out to see who the carriage visitor was, beheld with horror the red-coated and booted corpse of his young master, who had broken his neck by a fall from his horse during the day's hunt. The body was placed in a large unused room near the back staircase, and that night was heard, for the last time in Alton Court, the strange sounds which had so often appalled its inmates. The gossip of the neighborhood said the manes of the murdered artist were now appeased.

But perhaps the strangest part of the story remains to be told: the same afternoon, the very same hour, when Reginald Elang met his death in the hunting-field, the poor lunatic governess, whose terrible paroxysms had been incessant since the night that she cast herself on the dead body of her husband became suddenly calm and reasonable, and recovered her senses so rapidly that, ere another week, she was released from confinement, and went to a distant part of the kingdom, from which she had been originally brought to Alton Court by Mrs. Elang. The gossip accounted for this critical change upon the same grounds that they did the cessation of the ghostly sounds on the rear staircase of Alton Court, which, not long afterwards, was entirely deserted by the family, and when I last saw it it was no longer used as a private residence.

#### LOST LAMBS.

By E. LYNN LINTON.

In the spring of 1865 a lady,\* living at Leytonstone, N.E., took to heart certain dimly-understood and less-discussed miseries of the lowest class of little waifs—children under six, who "had been grievously dragged into such terrible sins, that they could no longer be kept in Village Schools or Orphan Homes intended for the training of comparatively pure children." She began her little Home of six wretched inmates on scraps and gifts of all sorts. A grocer sent her sugar and treacle; a baker gave her flour; some one lent her a few mattresses; some one else sent a ton or so of coals; here came in a bag of rice; there a parcel

\* When she first began her work this lady suppressed her name in her reports and letters, &c.; now I have her permission to give it in full. She is Miss Agnes Cotton, daughter of the late William Cotton, Esq., of the Bank of England.



of three-legged tools that served for both chairs and tables; an old servant went as matron; and the lady's mother gave the cottage. Thus she started, very humbly, very hopefully; and of the six little girls with whom she began her work of tenderness and mercy, their ages ranging from five to eleven, there was not one who was not qualified for a penitentiary or a reformatory, had she been old enough.

The question now was, how to employ and how to maintain this little family of castaways, so as to keep them from the greater evil which must come if they were turned adrift again into the streets. Some one suggested "taking in washing" as the thing which requires the least arduous apprenticeship; and the lady acted on the idea. A washing machine, a stove, and some irons, were given as the nucleus of the future laundry; and the six little creatures began with washing for two boys in the old stables adjoining the cottage. How well the work has prospered may be inferred from the fact that the Home now washes for thirteen families, besides a school which sends the linen of fifty persons. I can bear the testimony of an eye-witness to the first-rate quality of the work done. I have never seen better washing—seldom so good. Every one in the Home, from the eldest to the youngest, bears a hand; and "Lady," as Miss Cotton is always called by the children, herself helps—much of the delicate goffering being done by her.

It is pleasant to see this large family of children and grown-up girls all occupied, busy, capable, happy, in the various stages of the work. The little ones do the lighter parts, and machinery of all kinds helps the heavier. One of the elder girls, "E," whose history will be more specially particularised by-and-by, is a first-rate laundress; ever since she was fourteen distancing any woman who could be got for the amount and deftness of her work. She went to the Home in 1865, and was then a miserable starveling whom many a Christian mother would have shuddered to touch had she known her awful history and condition. She is now a useful and valuable worker. A pretty little girl of eight, mothering her two younger brothers with the thought and care of a woman, is an active elf of no small value as she flits about the washing room; and "Hector," a chubby, blue-eyed young Trojan of five, was occupied during my visit in pulling out the flannels, which a strong-looking girl sent crawling between the rollers, as she turned the handle of the machine. The steaming clothes were hot for his small, fat hands; but he managed bravely; took virtuous care not to tear the dragging tapes; and piled up the fleecy garments cleverly on the tin platter which kept them from the stain of the sloppy floor. Another little creature folded the wet clothes for "packing," previous to washing; and the younger ones generally paired the socks, and tied them and the pocket-handkerchiefs in bundles, cut the soap, cleaned the pegs, waited on the elders, and made themselves actively useful and happy in their zeal.

The stories of some of these unhappy children are fearfully sad; and some so terrible that I scarcely know how to tell them. Still, it is a simple matter of duty to tell out as plainly as the world will bear to hear what things exist in this Christian England of ours; and to put it to the consciences of faithful men and women, themselves parents, whether more ought not to be done, than is done in one obscure humble little Home, by the efforts of one lady and her immediate friends only, to check this awful "canker in the bud," which is surely worse than any amount of conscious adult sin. Men and women are free agents, but children—

The story of E., to which I alluded just now, reads like a sensation novel; but every word, as I shall tell it, is either truth or less than the truth. The end has not come yet; but we can only hope that the poor girl will be kept safe through the temptations which await her. At all events, these past years of peace and virtue have been so much to the good.

E. is the child of an Italian adventurer, who was some sixteen years or so ago employed about the Opera. Her mother was his French servant. Her earliest recollection is that of being in a garret in Soho, with her mother, who threatened to kill her. An old woman, who lived in a room near theirs, begged the child of the mother; and the woman, glad enough to get rid of her burden, left her on the dame's hands, and departed into the night whence she has never returned. The old woman had two daughters and a son, all of whom married; the son taking to wife another servant of this same Italian adventurer. When E. was seven years old, the dame died, being christened and baptized on her deathbed; a scene that made a strong impression on the child. She left E. to the care of her daughters, asking them to bring her up between them, and not to let her want. The daughters took the little girl, and she lived first with one and then with another; while both the husbands qualified themselves for the Old Bailey by their hideous treatment of her. Before E. was ten years of age, she was earning ten shillings a week for them, and was essentially what the world calls "bait." Her course of life landed her in the hospital; where she was heard of by Miss Cotton, and found, desperate, deserted, and grievously sick both in soul and body. The lady, nothing daunted, took her up and carried her to the Home. She scarcely realised the task she had given herself. E.'s nature was wild and fierce; her passions were strong; her love of liberty, and her need of excitement great; but she had the potentiality of a conscience, poor lost lamb!—and while one part of her character drew her powerfully towards lawless courses of all kinds, the other

made her desire to be saved, and led up into something nobler and purer. In this chaotic state of mind, the lady had both her difficulty and her hope. By gentle treatment, kind and yet firm; by never slurring over the degradation of her past, but never ceasing to hold out the bright possibility of a pure and wholesome future; by trying to bring back this premature woman to something of the sweetness and docility of childhood; by skilful management when her fits of savage rage, her fits of wild impatience at the comparative quiet of the Home, and her mad desire to break away and go back to the noisy riot and excitement of her old life came upon her like possession—true soul sickness—the lady succeeded in keeping her until the age of sixteen, and in gradually softening and reclaiming her. But there were hard days to be got over during that time—days when E., resolved to be wicked yet unable to be disloyal, would turn the little prints and pictures of Christ and the angels about her bed with their faces to the wall; tear off the cross she wore round her neck; swear; rave; demand to go back to her old haunts; till the fit gradually subsided—when she would fling herself at the lady's knees in a paroxysm of repentance and despair, sometimes refusing to go into the prayer-room, kneeling only at a distance as the publican of old, as one too vile to draw nearer. And then she would quiet down into the better condition of peace and calmness, which gradually grew to be her more usual state. But we cannot picture what times of trial these must have been for the lady and her coadjutors—the patience, the faith, the intensity of Christian love, the fervent wrestlings in prayer that accompanied and followed the poor child's soul through these crises!

When E. was sixteen there came down to the Home two flaunting, evil-visaged women. They brought her the photograph of a handsome man, who they said was her father; and it was afterwards discovered that he was really her father, and that their mission was so far true. He had commissioned them to demand her as his daughter, and to request that she should be sent out to him, living at ease in Cairo, "to be made a lady of." The women reminded E. that she was now of the legal age to choose her own guardian; and they urged her to come with them and leave the Home and "Lady," her godmother. Miss Cotton was absent, but her coadjutor resisted them, and pleaded with the girl on the other side. It was the old story over again, of the angel and the devil, vice and virtue battling for the human soul; and poor E.'s wild nature and truer conscience had to guide her through the difficulty as passion or grace might determine. She stood for some minutes flushed and irresolute. On one side was her father, comparative wealth, pleasure, luxury, and the reckless life of the world. On the other poverty, hard work, the Home, and God. Suddenly she turned, and clung to the lady's hand, "I will not go! I will stay!" she said.

After this she ran away to London for a few days. The women's visit had disturbed her and she could neither rest in peace nor give herself up to evil. The letters to her godmother, during the three days she was absent, are among the most touching and tragic I have ever read. So simple, too, in their relation of her self-made difficulties and temptations! Over and over again she stood by the gin-shop door longing to go in, but remembering her life and teaching at the Home, thinking of the prayer-room and all she had heard therein, and then running away at hot speed. And standing, listening, longing, fearing, as she did so often, yet never once did she cross the threshold of one of these dens. Finally, wandering about Soho, wanting to be seen yet ashamed to go to the clergyman's house, she was caught by an old porter who knew her; and rescued. The lady took her for a time of probation into her private house; and from thence she passed back to the Home where she now is, and where may God grant her the grace to remain!

A second little creature is such another as E. was at her age; passionate and wilful, at times desperate and unmanageable, but coming right in the end by reason of her strong affections, and the divine germ of conscience which is growing slowly in her. This little creature, Bessie, was in a low lodging-house, where she was no one to care for her and keep her from evil; so the fate that is by no means uncommon among these deserted children befel her, as so many others. By the mercy of Providence she fell into the Lady's hands; and though she too has given them hard days and heavy nights by her lawless, undisciplined, violent nature, as yet the good has prevailed, and she has been kept safe among them.

One young child has been caught away from the infancy of her own home; another little creature, like an angel, has been taken from the infancy of a quiet, rural village, which looks all peace and virtue: one is utterly a wail and cast-away, without a friend in the world save the Lady and the Leytonstone Home; born no one knows where, bred no one knows how, and rescued from destruction by the Home. One was dedicated to crime by her own mother; another by her grandmother; and some are just gutter children, abandoned by society from the beginning. But no one is shut out. Those who are considered too bad for other Homes are taken into this, where they are sought to be cleansed and purified; and whence, when old enough, they are set forward in an honest way of life. It is not for the virtuous—they have aids—so much as for the lost children of the sinful poor that the Home has been founded. As Miss Cotton says in her report, "Many a poor child is sent

to me from some other Home because 'she will steal, or pick, or lie, fight, or behave ill at night,' and 'we cannot keep her.' I long to ask some of my sisters if they think the Good Shepherd only cares for the good and biddable lambs."

One great endeavor at the Home is to make it like a real home, where the children are treated as children—neither petted as repentant little sinners turned saints, nor preached at as irredeemable sinners who will never be cleared of their stains. They are children—naughty or good, obedient or disobedient, as it may chance; but always children, and at home. They are taught, and they are employed. The elder ones take charge of the younger; for there are fourteen very little ones, quite babies, chiefly from the Five Dials' district in Soho, most of whom are Miss Cotton's godchildren, and all of whom are of course too young for the special sorrow that has afflicted the elder. Miss Cotton's report speaks of these very little ones thus:—

"These little ones are only inadmissible to other orphanages because of their deep poverty. It may seem unwise to try to bring them up in a Home bound to receive very bad children, but five years' experience has made me trust that, with us, the little ones do good, and do not get harm. Was it from Dr. Arnold or from Tom Brown that I learnt how much may be done to help a difficult elder child by giving a younger one in charge? Still I do very much wish I could have a separate cottage for these tinies, and be able sometimes to keep them apart."

Sometimes there are outbreaks in the Home, which have to be put down with a firm hand. Once, one fiery little rebel was going to 'kill' the Lady's coadjutor with a hot iron, but she took thought in time, and did not; and there are frequent outbursts of rebellion and violence, that try the patience and nerves of all concerned. In Miss Cotton's own house, brought up by her, as her own, is a lovely child now a year old. When only seven weeks old it was sent to chance, with £100 pinned to its frock, to guide the hand of fate to a kindly issue. Knocked about and half starved for more than a week, nobody's care, nobody's charge, it was almost dead when the lady took it; now it is a fine, blooming, beautiful little creature, full of as much promise as a baby of a year old can be. So far as is known, it is the child of a gentleman in the Midland Counties; but both father and mother have repudiated it. Another girl in the Home is also the daughter of a gentleman and a woman of low origin, and worse nature; and the lady says that she proves in a most extraordinary manner the theory of "inherited qualities," showing in all sorts of odd ways some of the most pronounced features of the upper and lower classes combined, bad and good together. She was sent out into service when old enough; but the temptations of the outside world proved too strong for her; and she fled back to the Home, to be admitted as a penitent—doing the hardest work, sharing in none of the privileges, her only cry being, "Let me stay here, safe from temptation!" Miss Cotton has kept her on probation; hoping, yet fearing; but in any case willing to give her another chance. One child was an infant in an orphanage. She swore as soon as she began to talk (many of them do that), and, when dismissed as too bad by those who are obliged, by the rules of their constitution, to feed only the wholesome of Christ's flock, was found by the lady who cares for and cleanses the foul, to be one of the worst of the bad. Dirty, naughty, thieving, pretending insanity to escape work or punishment, her language horrible, and worse things yet behind, she seemed simply hopeless. Now she is cleanly, industrious, and of fair average goodness.

In this extraordinary family of lost lambs found and folded, a stranger would see nothing odd or unlikely, if they have been long enough at Leytonstone to have become really homed and somewhat civilized. (But the Lady says, for her own part, that the strain of dealing with such abnormal characters and experiences as theirs is something at times almost beyond her strength to bear. Nothing but the deepest sense of the need of such a home, and the belief in God's help, could carry her and her assistants through their terrible duties.) In the beginning the girls have a wild, starved, hunted look about them; they sink into corners, or stand defiantly at bay, like wild beasts. They are hard to conquer, and are true Ishmaelites in suspicion and hate; but the discipline, at once so free and yet so strict, so kindly, so full of occupation, so rich in religious hope and teachings, does its work; and the rounded forms and humanized faces tell that the starved wild beast has given place to the Christian child, with some idea of right and wrong, some germs of a true conscience.

The story of one poor little creature was very touching. She was the tiny folder of wet clothes for packing, previous to being washed. She is four years old, and one of seven. Her father and mother, who are not married, live at the top of a wretched house in Newport Market; he, a basket-maker and a drunkard; she, paralysed in one side. Of the children, one boy of nine is a cripple; another of eight is strong-bodied, but nearly a cripple. They go about together as one boy, under one coat, with bits of rags for shirts and trousers. Perhaps a pair of old boots or shoes is shared between them. The crippled boy does any washing of rags or floors in which the family indulges. The only girl, Alice—the "folder"—and her youngest two brothers were on the way to be christened, under the Lady's charge. She was caring most for the little boys, thinking the girl at her mature age, better able to fend for herself; when, on looking round,

she found her gone. After much search, she was discovered in the midst of a flock of sheep which were being driven to the slaughter-house. Some time after this the father ran away; and the mother went, with her young children, into the workhouse. A neighbor, a ticket-of-leave costermonger, saved the little girl, and sent her to her godmother, the Lady.

The Home is now altogether a household of fifty, including cripples, invalids, aged and infirm women, reprobate children whom no other Home will keep, very young orphans taken up starving out of the streets; and, among others, a woman and her two children, whose story is one of the old, sad and bad chronicles of deceit, vice, and self-indulgence. Their support comes from the laundry, from donations, and from the Lady's aged mother who allows her daughter to make up the deficiencies from her private purse. She, however, is very old and infirm; and when she goes, the prospect is a cheerless one enough. There are also all manner of stray and sick birds and animals, the care and love of which greatly help in the work of humanizing these poor little lost lambs. The Home has overflowed into three houses or cottages, where a wise division is as much as possible kept up; but, as we have seen, where it is not possible to keep up as much as would be quite wise. The children are from ten months to eighteen years old; and the adults number among them one old dame of sixty, and another of eighty. There is no room for them in the parish church, and their own little prayer-room is insufficient for their numbers. But they do the best they can, waiting for better days, and sure of the blessing of God.

The "out-girls" must not be forgotten. There are at least fourteen in service, doing well—some of them very well. Some of the letters which I have been allowed to read, sent by these out-girls to the old Home that sheltered, fed, and taught them to know good and to follow after righteousness, are wonderfully touching from their simple heartiness and earnest affection. Some, again, have gone wrong altogether; and some as we have seen, have flown back to the Home as their place of refuge from themselves. On this, Miss Cotton says in her report, or letter, "Here, again, I touch upon one of the pressing needs of such a work as this, a permanent Home for those quite unfitted to be out in the world."

There are many lovely charities in and about London, Charities in the support of which all may join, whatever the special dogma observed, because of the object which is beyond and above dogma. But there are none which appeal more directly to the heart, not only of Christians, but of citizens, of human beings, than the Children's Home at Leytonstone. To take out of the mire the wails and strays whom society has deserted and civilisation overlooked; to place them where they may be taught to get an honest living by their own industry, and to know good from evil; to humanize their wild hearts; to purify their soiled souls; to snatch from destruction so many immortal spirits; to bring the little ones to Christ, and to obey his behest, "Feed my lambs"—can there be a nobler object for any woman's work? for any man's sympathy? When we remember from what manner of life these children are rescued, what can we say but God bless the Home! God reward the tender soul that conceived such a work of mercy, and the brave heart that has battled for so many years with its difficulties!

## THE PICTURE OF HEALTH.

I am not less a devil-worshipper than the rest of my species; but I hate muscular depravity as I admire intellectual rascality. Dick Turpin I have always despised. A man who could only escape for a time, and at the cost of a noble 'Black Bess,' was not worthy the name of thief. Were I Lord Chamberlain, I should be very hard upon the Jack-Shppard drama. To exalt the brainless dare-devil villain above the calculating systematic scoundrel is an insult to our progress and enlightenment. A man who does all and more than a Dick Turpin could do, gets a flattering postscript put beneath his name on his tombstone, and leaves a good round sum to his rejoicing friends, is a rascal that obtains my profound respect. There is all the difference between the objects of my aversion and respect that exists between a great blundering donkey that breaks into my garden, tramples down my geraniums, and escapes by his heels or calmly takes a cudgelling for his misdemeanor, and a subtle fox, whose crime is only known by the scattered feathers of one other martyred goose.

The most admirable devil of my acquaintance is a Picture of Health. When I first knew him, he lived in an alley adjacent to our house, and within pea-shot of our upper window. This window was the coolest and airiest place one could find in the summer time, and the fact relative to distance was impressed upon me with wearying tautology. As soon as I had perched myself on the sill with a book, that interesting boy would appear at his window with a tin tube in his mouth, looking like a monumental cherub with a fractured trumpet. This Picture of Health was the son of a weakened care-worn little laundress—a restless, eager, anxious little woman, with a strenuous expression in every line and action of her body. He was as unlike her as a fine full-blown cabbage-rose is to the brier it grows upon. My mother was the first to call him 'the Picture of Health,' which she did in an envious tone, as she looked from his ruddy chubbiness to my sallow flabbiness. We were



about of an age when we first became acquainted, and that age was six—a period of life when we least regard social distinctions.

"What'er you got in your pocket?" were the first words he spoke to me.

"I've got a fourpenny-bit in my pocket that my gran'ma's given me," I replied with some pride.

"I don't believe you've got a fourpenny-bit in your pocket that your gran'ma's given you," he remarked.

I pulled the silver out and displayed it; he hastily took it from my hand and transferred it to his pocket. Instead of returning it, as I desired, he proceeded to corrupt my innocent mind.

"My mother's got a great copper that she biles close in," he said, "and it's full er bilin' water. Do you know the sweep?" I did know the sweep, and dreaded him with a paralysing fear. I faltered an assent, and he continued: "That sweep is my friend" (I found afterwards that this was a fiction), "and if you don't tell your gran'ma you gave me the fourpenny-bit, I'll make the sweep put you in my mother's bilin' copper." I avoided the Picture of Health after that; but it happened that when I again saw him, it was to be once more a sufferer by his delinquency. By going out of my way down a by-street in returning from school I could refresh myself, after the fatigues of study, by looking at the cakes in a confectioner's window. My eyes were the only organs that indulged in these luxuries; for I was bilious, and my father forbade them me, and I was so ugly a child that my aunts and uncles had for me no bowels of compassion. But I used to spend delightfully sad half-hours in looking at the delicacies, and seeing them disappear down the throats of little boys not bilious nor ugly. Just thus in later days, rejected as a partner, I have stood in happy agony watching my divinity smiling and whirling in another's arms.

This day business was dull at the confectioner's. Nobody was sitting on the tall cane chair, and the confectioner's young lady was not scooping the patties out of their pans. I noticed that fat new buns had replaced the buns of yesterday, and observed that the ginger-cake, with the piece out of the side, had not gone off; and then I became conscious that somebody else was observing the shop's contents. I could not mistake that ruddy, chubby little face. It was the Picture of Health. His little twinkling eyes were working restlessly, and in their pink fat beds appeared to me like the shining earwig that one finds in a ripe apple. He looked all over the shop, up and down the street, at me, across the road, and at a tin of pies on a chair half a yard from the door, all in a moment; and this he continued to do for some minutes, but always his surveys terminated at that tin of pies. At last he put his left hand on the doorstep, advanced one foot on the threshold, and bent forwards; the fingers of his right hand moved nervously, and his lips began to twitch in an extraordinary manner. Suddenly, with a movement swift and noiseless, his hand slashed at the pies, and he was gone. But the baker's man, who evidently had been on the watch, the next instant had sprung across the shop, and darted round the corner. The delinquent was presently brought back by the collar, howling dismally. Meanwhile, the baker's young lady had appeared, seized me by my hair, and conveyed me into the little parlor at the back of the shop. It was very small, very hot, but scented with such a refreshing and exquisite odor of caraway-seeds, that for one ecstatic moment I forgot everything but that. The baker's young lady, whom previously I had conceived to bear a strong resemblance to the figure of Justice set over the shop-front of Mr. Bugall the scale-maker, was for sending home the Picture of Health with a tart on his promising to repent, and taking me off to Bridewell for a contaminator of youthful virtue; but the baker's man, whose sense of justice was not so blassed by the contemplation of rosy cheeks and infant tears, boxed the Picture's small ears for some minutes before giving him his liberty. His punishment was severe; but shortly after I envied him his speedy expiation. Turning to me, the baker's man ordered me to empty my pockets; I eagerly and hastily obeyed, delighted to prove my innocence to him and the crowd who surrounded the shop-door. "Ah," said he, "it's just as I thought, he hasn't got a hap'n'y, and yet he's been prowling outside the window this half-hour. Why, you're always outside; I've watched you over and over again. What do you come mouching outside for, hey?" I answered him truthfully, that I came to look at the tarts—that's all. Every one laughed but me—I began to cry. But I couldn't weep prettily, as the Picture of Health could; I always made my face ten times uglier by the performance. Those two wicked assistants cross-questioned me for an interminable period, and my answers seemed to convince the crowd of my guilt. For I pertinaciously refused to tell my name, fearing that my father's knowledge of my ignominy would bring his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. At last they let me go with a punishment similar to that of my youthful acquaintance, but supplemented by some vicious slaps from the confectioner's young lady. In a thoughtful moment that evening I detected a moral as well as physical likeness between her and Mr. Bugall's figure of Justice; I saw the symbol of prejudice in the handkerchief over the eyes of Justice, which prevented her seeing what she was about with her scales.

The Picture of Health I often saw after this. His brazenness astounded me. There was in his face and ways no sign of remorse or contrition for his past wickedness. I wondered whether

he was right in his head. He too saw me, but he did not cultivate my acquaintance. Probably I did not look very pleasant or companionable; anyway he confined himself to shooting peas at me. My mother had occasion to change her laundress, and employed the little woman in the alley to wash the linen. Then I got a farther insight of the character of her son. When his name was mentioned, the little woman constantly said that he was a good boy—a very good boy; and from her manner in saying this I began to think that perhaps he had inherited his habit of lying from her—just as my yellowness was a disagreeable exaggeration of my father's pallor. The little woman was a widow, and her dear Billy (the Picture of Health) was the only living soul she had to care for (she said, "who cares for me;" but I make the inversion as being rather more truthful). She dressed so poorly, and lived so frugally, that we once wondered what she could do with all her money, for she worked from early morning until late night. She certainly was indulgent to her Billy, for that youth was seldom seen without a seasonable delicacy in his hand and mouth. And she was careless, frequently having to replace some article she said she had scorched or lost. Billy grew apace, and still remained the picture of health. His cheeks were round and rosy, and his jacket and other garments admirably filled. How ever he learnt to read and write, I don't know; but certainly he did not at school. His mother said she could not spare him. This weakness greatly exasperated my mother, who, I believe, would have had nothing to do with a woman so culpably weak had it not been for the pitiful anxiety that expressed itself in the many lines about the poor little woman's face. One day she came to our house, looking paler than usual, and asked if a little place could be found for her Billy—a little place where he would be treated kindly, and—My mother would listen to no more, and accused the little woman of pursuing a course with reference to her son that must inevitably make him selfish and bad, and relieved herself of certain opinions she had long pent up. At first the little laundress answered only with tears, but there followed a confession that for ever altered my mother's opinion of her. She admitted that her Billy was in the habit of taking things, that she was his slave, and that she could no longer endure her thralldom. He procured from her everything he wanted by threatening to steal it publicly. She could hide nothing from him. If there was nothing else, he stole the linen, and in some mysterious way disposed of it. To get a "little place" for an assistant of this kind was no easy matter: to recommend him for a trustworthy servant would be as disastrously kind as supplying gunpowder for a useful fuel. The poor mother herself was too honest to recommend him. However, the difficulty was removed by the Picture of Health finding a little place for himself. Our laundress now appeared radiant, her cheeks began to plump, and the lines in them and her forehead became less definite: she was cheerful, delighted, and happy. Her Billy was quite another boy; he came home at night and started to business in the morning like a man, and he was a dear good fellow, and she felt that Heaven had answered her widow's prayer. The next thing that happened was this—the Picture of Health found for himself another situation. This time it was in the dock of a police-court, and he received such a character from his late master, that the worthy magistrate before whom he stood was induced to offer him a temporary "little place" at Pentonville, with constant employment and everything found him. But in consideration of his mother, who stood trembling and red-eyed near her son, and in consideration of his looking the picture of health, his acceptance of the "little place" was not insisted upon. So the next day found him cheerfully shooting peas at me; so did I. The little laundress bent over her wash-tub day after day, and the brief sunshine went for ever out of her eyes, and her back seemed as if it only once again would unbend. Yet she never spoke an ill word of her sorrow, never spoke of him but in kindness, with motherly excuses. Sometimes she took his sins upon her own poor head—God knows the sins she had committed she had expiated with bitterest suffering and cruellest self-punishment—always she expressed hope that he would yet become a good man. I believe it was this hope that kept her from madness. To her eye alone was there anything in her Billy's behavior to encourage hopefulness. I used to think that somehow the wrong body must have been given to his soul, and that if he had been a pig his mother's hopes would have been realized, and she would have had her care compensated by seeing a first-class medal awarded to her son at some agricultural show for his fatness, fairness, and general utility. He ate always, and grew and grew. When both hands were not required in feeling, one warmed itself in his trousers-pocket. At last his mother fell ill. Health is a capricious lover, that attends most those who seek his attendance least; fond of bright looks, straight limbs, and glowing cheeks, he refused to have anything to do with this little woman, so old and withered and shrunk and bent had she become with her thirty years of existence in this flowery world. When she was no more to be seen arching over her work at that back window, I wondered how it would go with her son; but when in the evening I met him, and noted he had both hands in his pockets, I wondered no more. The next day he was placed again before the magistrates; for his very first serious attempt at getting a living at the expense of an actual stranger was attended with ill success. His appearance again saved him from the ignominy of correction; he was

humanely sent away for reformation. The parochial authorities removed the little laundress to the hospital, and there she lay stricken and speechless, until kinder death removed her to another, where broken hearts are healed.

I believe that the Picture of Health was really reformed in the institution to which he was sent, and that he turned over a new leaf altogether. He was of an age to learn and to profit by experience; and the thing he learnt was this; his legs could no longer be trusted; that last affair with the preservers of public property had shown them to be his superiors at running. He was too fat for muscular depravity. To get on in the world at all he must pursue a course less impeded by unpleasant obstacles than that which had terminated in a diet of a plain character, and limited in quantity. His mother, too, had played him false; on such reeds he must no longer lean his heavy weight—his own happiness and comfort forbade it. So he reformed himself. The flowers of repentance he doubtless suffered not to bloom unseen, and the sweet odor thereof very likely he wafted into the nostrils of the appreciative. Otherwise I know not how he could have risen to the eminence at which, when we met again some three or four years later, I gazed up at him. About this time I was seeking daffy bread in return for my valuable services. I succeeded in obtaining a situation in a Manchester house of business as foreign correspondent. I was to share the duties with another clerk; that clerk I discovered was my quondam acquaintance, the Picture of Health. I knew him directly, and he knew me; but we were both wise, and kept our little knowledge to ourselves—the very best thing we could do with the dangerous commodity. He was unaltered except in height (he was taller than I am): but his eyes seemed more than ever restless and like earwigs. I found him still a robber; but he robbed legally. He took nothing that could be found in his pockets. He robbed me. I say it rather in sorrow than in boast; I am a modest man, and careless about trifles. In a subtle way he contrived to appropriate all the praise attending our joint efforts, and to transfer to my shoulders all the blame. I hadn't the impudence to show that some of the praise was mine, nor the energy to show that at least some of the blame was his: so at the end of a year he went up a step in the firm, and I went out of it altogether and opened a career in London. Now, I thought, and indeed hoped, our connection would cease; but we were linked by Fate, and three years after we again came in contact. My residence was in a small suburban village. Every face was familiar, and few incidents occurred unknown to me or to any other of our little community. We had a village belle and coquette, and not a heart amongst us had escaped her wiles and cruelties. She jilted us all round one after another; some of us went up and were vanquished again and again. One whom every one knew as Mr. Brookes's Joe was thought to be the belle's favorite; certainly he had been plucked more often than any of us. He took his abasement with the equanimity that accompanies familiarity with misfortune, and a dogged resolution to try again. Such men generally take their degrees at last. When ever our beauty had no one else to persecute, she lured Mr. Brookes's Joe to her feet; and there he complacently grovelled. His varying fortunes were expressed by his whistle; for though Joe could not be considered a musical genius (he could whistle but one tune, and that "Pop goes the weasel"), he put such expression into his tune that his siffilation was more conclusive than words. He had been whistling so long in a major key that I thought he never again would whistle in the minor, and I presaged happy things for Mr. Brookes's Joe; but one morning, as I was running to the train, I met him with his basket on his arm (Mr. Brookes was a grocer), and he was whistling his only air very flat, in hymn-like time, with melancholy turns. It was the most funereal whistling I ever heard, and doleful to a degree. I knew what had happened, and was only anxious to know who occupied the shoes he lately had been whistling in. That evening my curiosity was gratified, but not I. In new ribbons, and with her very sauciest smirk, the belle passed me leaning languishingly on an arm of speckled cloth, and looking bewitchingly into her lover's little eyes. Again I recognized the liquid depths at the bottom of those wells of fat. It was the Picture of Health. Both saw me, and both would have passed me; but I chose that they should not. I stepped in their way and greeted them as old friends, passed a remark upon the weather, and made my old acquaintance promise to call upon me before catching the last train to the City. The train leaves at 10.10; at 10.5 he had not fulfilled his vow; so I put on my hat, ran down to the station, and just as the train was moving on, jumped into the same carriage with the Picture. We had a little talk and arrangement before I left him to walk home, in consequence of which we met the following evening at the house where dwelt the parents of our coquette. There my old friend made a solemn declaration of his intentions, which were of the most honorable character, and begged the hand of our coquette. He was rich—had become partner in the firm I had left. I knew he had robbed his way up to that position; but that was no business of mine. I felt I had done my duty when I left him that evening, with the nearest approach to a scowl on his amiable features that I had ever seen there.

In the course of time there were three dis-

appearances in our village. First the Picture of Health vanished; then Mr. Brookes's Joe's whistle permanently ceased to make itself heard; and finally, our Beauty left our village in shame and grief. The firm to which I have alluded had dissolved, and the partner we wanted was abroad. We were not rich enough to buy justice. So the Picture of Health and his promises were but a memory cursed by all save her who had suffered by them. If I had the knack of writing sentiment, I might make a long article out of her woman's grief and forgiveness and unreasonable love. Of the latter there was a faint counterpart in Mr. Brookes's Joe, who would have made her a wife, and have become a father to her child. But she was as constant and serious now as she had been fickle and frivolous before. Perhaps she refused to link Joe's fate with hers from a feeling of rectitude, possibly from a lingering hope that the false one would yet come to redeem himself. Anyway Joe carried about his basket of groceries in silence.

Last week, as I was passing St. —'s church, a bridal company were stepping from their carriages. The bridegroom had come up only a minute before the bride, so I had the felicity of seeing both the happy young people. Once more the Picture of Health was before me. Had I been less lethargic and opposed to "scenes," I should have walked up the aisle in a melodramatic style, and there and then have forbidden that marriage, thereby making myself appear a hero to some and a fool to others; as it was, I merely asked a coachman to come and drink at my expense and tell me who these happy young people were, and where they were going this fine spring morning. The coachman was communicative, and told me, that the gentleman was awful rich with speculating or something, and that the lady too was awful rich, though a bit plain to look at, and that they were going to have breakfast at No. 1 So-and-so-square. It seemed very hard that so old an acquaintance should not have bidden me to his marriage-feast, in which he must have known I should feel deeply interested. I felt it must be his memory that failed him rather than his affection; therefore, to relieve his mind from the affliction the knowledge of his neglect might afterwards occasion, I determined to attend his breakfast unasked, and be an uninvited guest. I thanked the coachman and bade him farewell, and quickly made my way to So-and-so-square. I found no difficulty in getting admittance, and when we all went into breakfast the confectioner's man (how he reminded me of old times!) slipped me into a seat between two ladies, as if the arrangement had been made beforehand. Being, as I have said, a modest man, I was so overpowered by a sense of my own temerity that for some time I knew nothing—a feeling I imagine an unblooded soldier must experience when for the first time he sees nothing between himself and the enemy; and with just the courage that comes to him in that position was I presently nerved. I opened a brisk conversation with the ladies on either hand, and swallowed whatever food was set before me, perfectly regardless of the fearful consequences. After a time I lifted my eyes from my plate, and looked about me. Very little removed from me on the opposite side of the table sat the happy man. He, too, kept his eyes on his plate. His cheeks were pale-looking, as if those radiant apples had turned up their nether side. Of course he had seen me. I was happy in my jokes, and the ladies beside me, being single and tolerably advanced in years, were appreciative and pleased to laugh consumedly. Laughter is catching—especially on such an occasion, where silence is sometimes broken by a whispered conversation that verges on the melancholy. I became the funny man of the table. I saw all eyes but the earwig ones: they resolutely avoided me.

Said one of the ladies: "O, Mr.—er?"

"Nemesis," I said.

"Mr. Nemesis,—what an odd name!—have you known the bridegroom long?"

"From his innocent boyhood; and you?"

"But lately. I have known the bride from her girlhood."

I was delighted; nothing I said would be wasted. What the bridegroom did not hear directly from me, he would indirectly through his wife.

"What a trying occasion this must be!"

"To some; but the happy bridegroom has had more disagreeable trials than this."

He dropped his fork.

"How well he has borne them!"

"Men with strong moral principles do not permit themselves to be agitated by the unavoidable misfortunes that happen to themselves or to other people."

"He has never told us of these trials."

"He is so modest."

"Such modesty is a great virtue."

"Except when it excludes a wife or a wife's friend from that confidence without which marriage cannot be perfect happiness."

"Did you know his family?"

"I knew his mamma extremely well. I used to see her every day, and she visited us regularly once a week. She loved her son with a fervor and depth rare even among mothers; she toiled, though differently, as hard for him as ever he has toiled for—himself."

"She is dead?"

"I was with her when she breathed her last. And her last breath formed these words: 'My son.'"

"Was he present?"

"No; he did not know of her death until after. He had been studying and trying hard for some time previously for an appointment under Government, had passed his examination, and at



that time was engaged in the onerous duties of his office."

"How shocking! Tell me of his other trials."

"Not now."

"Will you presently?"

"Yes; when I propose the bridegroom's health."

I looked across the table. The happy man's full nether lip hung bloodless on his chin, displaying his teeth like a dog that is being strangled.

"But you are not the 'best man.'"

"No; but I'm good enough for that."

I looked up again. He was speaking to a waiter.

"You will be doing so quite out of order."

"On the contrary, I shall be doing so in order—to please myself."

(The waiter was working his way round the table.)

"I expect you are very vain of your oratory."

"When I look at the bridegroom ought I not to be proud of my species? Excuse me one moment."

The waiter gave me a hastily-folded piece of paper. It contained a second piece, that crackled as I opened it. I was a note for 50*l*. I looked up once more; what little expression the fat face was capable of was of abject supplication. I knew the significance of the 50*l*.; and if, as I before hypothesised, I had been melodramatically constituted, I should have risen and hurled it in its sender's teeth or eye. Instead I fumbled it about nervously in my lap until decision tardily came to me.

"You look quite disturbed," said the lady beside me.

"I am very much affected. I have received a note."

"A nice note?"

"The very nicest—a fifty pound note. It is from the bridegroom."

"How odd!"

"Would you like to know why he sent it?"

"O, no; ha, ha!"

"Very well, then—you shall. The note is a desire that I should spare his blushes, and forego my little biographical oration. The money is half of a little annuity he allows a poor friend of mine—a little broken-hearted woman with a child."

"And shall you forego your speech?"

"Well" (a sigh), "I suppose I must. One cannot have one's own way with these dreadfully charitable people."

Hardships and sufferings come to all of us in one way or another. If we have been guilty, we call it retribution; if we have not, we call it by some other sentimental name. The Picture of Health had been guilty, and his retribution came to him mainly in a disarrangement of his feeding apparatus and a swelling of the legs: my doctor tells me this. His wife is a virago and a tyrant; so I hear from my wife. With his offsprings mine will hold no converse. I know he is wretchedly miserable: this I see myself when I call on his wedding-day for the never-failing annuity.

## OUR SCHOOLMISTRESS.

### I.

I am a middle-aged lady, living quite by myself in the little town of St. Bridget's, where it happened, and I know the whole story from beginning to end, and the beginning was this:

I was paying a morning visit to dear old Mrs. Ambrose, our vicar's wife, and we were very busy over the 'Blanket and Flannel' accounts, which never, by any chance whatever, came out right, and I generally had to pay a sovereign or two to make up the deficiency; but this time they seemed rather less wrong than usual, and we were beginning to feel proud of ourselves, when the vicar marched into the room with his wideawake on, and said,

"Bother!"

I will do him the justice to say that he took off his wideawake as soon as he saw me, and met the requirements of the occasion by addressing me.

"Mrs. Acton, here's a bother!"

"What!" we exclaimed hurriedly, for we saw there was something serious.

"That—that *prig* of an inspector says we must have a certificated mistress," replied the vicar; and then he sat down, and we all looked at each other in solemn silence for full three minutes.

A certificated mistress at St. Bridget's! That meant turning out the dear old woman who had kept the school for the last five-and-twenty years, and had taught our girls to hem and stitch and darn so beautifully that they got places as work-women far and wide! And she had taught both girls and boys the best manners of any children in Southshire, and had trained them up to be honest, God-fearing men and women, besides teaching them some reading and writing, and the first four rules of arithmetic. Nearly all the children who had stayed long enough at the school could read easy words in large print, and several of the clever ones had been known to write out the Lord's Prayer from memory, and to say the multiplication-table quite perfectly. What could anybody want more? No wonder Mr. Ambrose called the inspector a prig. I called him something much worse, but as my thoughts were not put into words they need not be repeated.

"O dear, dear!" cried poor Mrs. Ambrose, as the full meaning of the inspector's decision broke upon her; "what shall we do? Poor Mrs. Todkins will break her heart."

"And that's not the worst of it. The school

will be ruined, good for nothing in the world!" exclaimed the vicar, getting up and tramping about the room. "The children will be stuffed with facts; but they won't get the education they do now. As if knowledge and education were the same thing! I suppose some think they are," he added, kicking a stool as viciously as if it had been the inspector himself.

"I don't know about education," I replied; which was quite true, for I didn't; "but no one will teach sewing like Mrs. Todkins, I am quite sure, and the certificated mistresses I have seen have been such very grand young women, that if they are all alike I shall be afraid to go into the school."

"O, they are all alike, my dear," sighed Mrs. Ambrose; "they wear chignons and silk dresses and feathers, and are very dreadful."

"Can't we get out of it?" I asked faintly. But the vicar shook his head, and I did not repeat the question. Even at St. Bridget's we knew something of the Education Act, which was driving scores of inoffensive incumbents mad, and upsetting the peace of half the parishes in England. I daresay it is a very wise and necessary Act, but it is a dreadfully troublesome one; and as we sat in the drawing-room that day we did not know which was the worse, losing an old mistress or getting a new one; but we did hate the inspector with a hatred that was not quite consistent with our religious principles.

There was a terrible stir in the town when the news was whispered about, and every time I went to the vicarage, Mrs. Ambrose had some fresh trouble to confide to me. Who broke the news to Mrs. Todkins I never heard, but I suppose the vicar did it. I did not go near the school for a week, fearing that I should be received with tears and lamentations; but the old lady bore it much better than we could have hoped, and we subscribed largely, and bought her a testimonial—of course it was a teapot, one of Elkington's best—and we invited her to a party, when the vicar and the churchwarden made speeches, and everybody else cried, and we felt much better afterwards.

The *St. Bridget's Chronicle* had a long account of it on the following Saturday, and as the churchwarden was also the mayor, it looked very grand indeed to read how "his reverence" and "his worship" had paid well-merited compliments to "the valued instructress of our youthful townsmen."

So, on the whole, we got rid of Mrs. Todkins better than might have been expected. But finding her successor, the certificated mistress, was quite another business. We had thought it would be an exceedingly simple matter, for naturally there would be a great competition for such a school as ours, and the vicar would select the most suitable person from among the list of candidates. But there was no competition whatever. It took us several days to realise this astonishing fact, and we doubted whether the *Guardian* and the National Society's paper had duly inserted the advertisements. But when we came to look we found them in the proper column, only it struck us for the first time that there were an enormous number of other advertisements very much like ours indeed, except that some of them offered a great deal more money than we had thought of giving.

Mrs. Ambrose made this discovery as she looked over the *Guardian* on Thursday morning.

"My dear, here are three, no four, advertisements for certificated mistresses, offering fifty pounds a year!"

"Fifty! we have only said thirty-five," replied the vicar; "no wonder we have no answers." And as the days went on, and weeks began to slip away, he saw that it behoved him to do something, or the inspector would be coming again before we had our mistress, and there was no saying that would happen then; we should lose our grant, and possibly incur other penalties, which were terrible by reason of their vagueness.

"I'll write to Dobson," said Mr. Ambrose to his wife.

And he wrote to Mr. Dobson the next morning as soon as he went into his study.

Mr. Dobson was the principal of the great training college at Hatley, and an old friend of the vicar's, so he might just as well have written to him sooner, only none of us think of all the right things to do just at the right time.

"If you want a mistress, offer seventy pounds," said the principal by return of post.

And the vicar did offer seventy pounds, though where the money was to come from I could not tell, and I don't think he could either. But he said we must all "put our shoulders to the wheel;" and as I have generally found that that means giving money, I was glad to think that the "Blanket and Flannel" accounts were not so far wrong as usual.

Back came another letter from Mr. Dobson, to say that he had a mistress who had just finished training. A widow; exactly the person to suit St. Bridget's, and she would accept the situation on certain conditions. I don't know what the conditions were, except that her evenings were to be at her own disposal, only I know that it seemed to me very odd to hear of the schoolmistress making conditions, and accepting such an enormous salary, as if she were conferring a favor.

The vicar said it was the result of competition, the supply not being equal to the demand; but I thought it might be indirectly referred to strikes and unions, though I did not exactly see how; but when there are so many dreadful things going on in the country, they work into each other in a wonderful manner.

"It is a comfort that we are to have a

widow," I remarked to Mr. Ambrose; "she will be staid and respectable, and not such a responsibility as a young girl."

"O, I don't know," sighed Mrs. Ambrose piteously; "I think I would rather have a young person, even if she did wear chignons and feathers. Widows are so—"

She stopped suddenly, remembering that I was a widow, and went on to a fresh sentence; but I wondered what she was going to say.

"I know I shall be afraid of her," she said. "And she is going to play the organ and manage the choir; she will be sure to want her own way in everything, and it won't be nice and comfortable as it used to be. And then, my dear, she is certain to be quite young; no middle-aged person would have taken the trouble to train herself, even if she had the cleverness, which isn't likely. Depend upon it, she will be young and pretty, and all the shopmen will be falling in love with her, and people will talk scandal, and there will be unpleasantness."

"I don't see that it follows," I said rather sharply; for I did not like the way she spoke of widows. It is very odd; but women whose husbands are alive always give themselves airs about us. I think it is because they are jealous of our power of marrying again, having, as it were, two chances to their one; at least, I cannot discover any other reason, but, of course there may be one that I don't know of.

### II.

In a fortnight Mrs. Henry arrived. It was a long journey from Hatley to St. Bridget's, and the last four miles had to be done by road, in an omnibus that jolted a good deal, so that people were apt to be tired when they reached the town. Mr. Ambrose, like the courtly old gentleman he was, went down to meet the new mistress at the Silver Fish, where the omnibus always stopped.

"I daresay she will like to go straight home, but you had better invite her to come here to tea," said his wife, as he went away. And I, hearing the invitation given, and being very curious to see Mrs. Henry, thought that it would be unkind to leave Mrs. Ambrose alone during the interval of expectation.

"Now they are coming," cried the poor lady, as we heard the garden door open. "I shan't know what to say to her, Mrs. Acton; I wish I had not asked her to come."

"It's no matter, for the vicar is alone," I replied, looking out of the window, whence I could see that gentleman rapidly approaching the house.

He came straight in to us, but his face wore an expression of dismay.

"Well?" we cried as he entered; then, seeing his face, his wife exclaimed, "O Justin, what is it? Is she so very bad?"

"Bad!" cried the vicar, standing in front of us. "What the dickens could Dobson send her here for? I wrote for a schoolmistress, didn't I, Mrs. Acton?"

"I believe so," I replied meekly; "hasn't he sent one?"

"O, do tell us what she is," entreated Mrs. Ambrose, wringing her little white fingers. "Do tell us what she is."

"My dear, she is a lady," said the vicar; and then he sat down and looked at us, and we looked at him.

For a few moments we were too much astonished to speak.

"A lady! what shall we do with her?" gasped Mrs. Ambrose presently, as all the social complications of the position rose before her.

"That's the bother of it; I foresee all sorts of difficulties," sighed the vicar; "but it can't be helped, and," he added, brightening, "perhaps other people won't find it out if we don't tell them."

"How is she dressed?" I asked eagerly.

"All in black, looking small and straight, somehow."

"Is she pretty?"

"No."

"Then they won't find her out," I said emphatically. "If a woman isn't pretty and well dressed, and does not call herself a lady, she will only be found out by her own class."

"How can you know?" said the vicar, looking at me.

"Never mind how,—I do know; and if we and Mrs. Henry are wise enough to keep our own counsel and our own places, it will be all right."

"But won't she expect to be treated as a lady—asked to dinner and all that?" said Mrs. Ambrose doubtfully.

"I think not," said the vicar; "and if she does we can't help it. If she is a lady, she will recognise her position and accept it."

"Hadm't you better write to Mr. Dobson?"

"Perhaps I had;" and he went away and did it.

Before the answer came I had seen Mrs. Henry at her work in the school, and at once gave in to the vicar's decision.

She was a lady, without any manner of doubt. The tone of voice, the graceful bow, the quiet hands, the self-possessed dignity of her manner, made her seem to my poor old eyes a very fine lady indeed. But she was dressed in a common black-stuff dress, with little folds of black crape round the throat and wrists, and a quaint sort of cap that covered nearly all her hair. There was not a speck of brightness or a single detail of prettiness in her whole appearance. Certainly our schoolmistress did not wear chignons or feathers, or any of the other enormities accredited to the sisterhood.

I could not tell how old she was; she might have been five-and-forty. I used to watch her

for half hours at a time to try and settle the question to my own satisfaction, but I was always puzzled. The unbecoming dress mystified me, and I had to give it up; but I sometimes used to picture her dressed in other garments, and fancy that she would be a very different looking woman if her costume were different. As it was, she looked so small and insignificant that some of the children were led by their ignorance to be naughty and troublesome; in fact, to try their power with this quiet little woman, who was about half the size of portly Mrs. Todkins, and never raised her voice above its usual quiet tone.

But she showed her authority at the first sign of disobedience. There was no threatening, no talking about how she would punish them if they were naughty, but the punishment came swiftly on the commission of the offence, and in less than a month she had established such discipline as had never been dreamed of under the old rule.

And she taught them so wonderfully. I used to listen in amazement while she gave the lessons, and the children began to improve rapidly.

In the mean time Mr. Dobson wrote to the effect that he had sent the best mistress in Hatley to his old friend; that he would answer for her passing eighty per cent of the children under her care; and that as to her social position, it was a matter entirely beyond the question; but many ladies were qualifying for certificates preferring the life of a schoolmistress to that of a governess, in which they showed their sense. He did not know whether Mrs. Henry was a lady or not, but he knew she was a first-rate mistress, and St. Bridget's ought to think itself very lucky to have her.

We are felt rebuked after that, and as time went on we began to value our mistress as much as Mr. Dobson could wish.

At first Mrs. Ambrose made little doubtful overtures to her, but Mrs. Henry showed every one whom it might concern that she knew her position and intended to keep to it. Once and again, at long intervals, she would accept an invitation to tea at the vicarage, or at my house; but she never told us anything about herself. Who she was, where she came from, we had no idea. When the holidays arrived, she went away and left no address, but was back again at St. Bridget's the day before the school opened.

How we did miss her during the holidays! not on week-days, but in the church on Sunday; for the organ behaved as differently under her hands as the children did, and her splendid contralto voice had brought strangers to our church from far and wide. The choir were content to be taught by such a mistress, but they wandered out of the way dreadfully when she was absent, and got lost in the *Te Deum* so hopelessly that it only reached a conclusion by some one of more sense than the rest beginning to sing the concluding verse.

We used to wonder, Mrs. Ambrose and I, what Mrs. Henry did in the evenings. Her dress was so simple that needlework for herself could not occupy her time; yet she was seldom out of doors, even in the sweet summer evenings, until it was almost dark, and then she used to walk up and down the little garden that divided her house from the school for an hour at a time more for the sake of exercise than enjoyment, it would seem, by the rapid steady pace at which she moved. One night, when I was coming home late, I stopped and spoke to her.

"You walk late, Mrs. Henry; but perhaps it is the pleasantest time during the hot weather."

"It is the cheapest, Mrs. Acton. It saves an hour of daylight to come out now instead of earlier."

It struck me all of a heap, as the people say, to hear this woman, who was earning 70*l*. per annum, and appeared to have no one but herself to care for, talk of "saving daylight" as if the cost of a candle were something to be avoided. I felt very sorry for her. I don't know why it came over me all at once, as it did, that her life was a very hard one. But I put my wrinkled old hand on the little firm white fingers which rested on the gate, and said:

"My dear, you must not work too hard."

I was frightened when I had done it; she was so self-possessed and reserved, that I thought she would be angry; but, instead of that, the steady little fingers began to tremble and twined themselves round mine with a clinging grasp, and then I found she was crying. I didn't say a word more to her. When people are as old as I am, and have gone through a great deal of trouble, they know what poor weak things words are, and how often they do more harm than good. So I held her hand without speaking, and presently she stopped crying.

"Sometimes I feel so lonely," she whispered, "and you were so kind; please forget it, Mrs. Acton."

"Yes," for I quite understood her. "But is not your life too hard? Can't you let an old woman help you, my dear?"

She took up my hand, and kissed it.

"No, it is not too hard, and no one can help me; but it will be easier by and by. Good-night."

And then she slipped away, as if afraid of saying more, and I went home and thought my thoughts in silence.

### CHAPTER III.

St. Bridget's was all alive, for the Bishop was coming to hold a visitation in the town. No bishop had ever come there before within the memory of man; for the last one had been old and ill for years before his death, and the shep-



herds of those days had not thought it needful to go about among their flocks so much as is considered right in the present time, and sheep living in remote towns had to make long journeys when they attended episcopal gatherings.

But that was all to be changed under the new reign; for our bishop was not only a great scholar and a great divine, but a strong man also, who would go into every corner of his diocese, and see with his own eyes how matters were going on. He had only filled the throne for two years, and this was his primary visitation, and it was to be held in twelve towns instead of two.

St. Bridget's was one among the twelve, and Mrs. Ambrose had been thinking about her luncheon for weeks, when it occurred to the vicar that the bishop might find it convenient to sleep at St. Bridget's for a night either before or after the visitation.

He was asked, and accepted by return of post. He would be glad to stay at St. Bridget's vicarage on the night of the 26th, which was the date of the visitation.

Mrs. Ambrose was delighted with the honor, but bewildered at the responsibility; and we had many consultations about his lordship's comfort, and the proper mode of entertaining him, and were very nervous lest something had been omitted or forgotten at the last moment.

But when he came, we forgot our anxiety; he was so pleasant and genial, and took everything so easily, that I thought he was much less formidable than his chaplain—a dignified personage—who seemed oppressed by the dignity of his office.

It all went off nicely: the luncheon was charming; the bishop affable, the clergy in full attendance. Only one disappointment occurred.

Our singing in church was not up to the mark. Mrs. Henry's voice was not heard once during the service; and at luncheon some of the visitors noticed the omission.

"Have you lost your lovely contralto, Mrs. Ambrose?" inquired the rural dean; "I did not hear her to-day."

"O, no, our mistress is still with us. I don't know why she did not sing; perhaps she has a cold," replied Mrs. Ambrose.

Then the conversation drifted into educational channels, and Mrs. Henry was forgotten.

But I knew that she had not a cold. I had heard her singing magnificently, as I passed the church, when the choir were practising an hour before service, and her silence puzzled me.

Presently the bishop's courteous voice was heard saying:

"I hear your school is doing remarkably well, Mrs. Ambrose; will you take me to see it presently?"

"Certainly, my lord."

And as soon as the general gathering had dispersed, Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose and myself accompanied the bishop to the school-house. Neither the chaplain nor the rural dean came with us, for which we were afterwards thankful. I entered with the vicar, the bishop having lingered a moment at the door with Mrs. Ambrose to admire the view of the Southshire Wolds, with the sea glittering beyond them in the distance.

"Here is the bishop come to see the school, Mrs. Henry," said the vicar blandly.

As he spoke, he glanced round the room, to see that all was in order. I, not thinking of the school, was looking at Mrs. Henry. She flushed crimson, and then turned white to the lips. With a hasty movement, she passed round to the other side of the great black board on which she had been drawing a map, and the strange thought came into my head:

"Is she trying to hide herself?"

But the bishop was in the school by this time, and the children stood at attention, and stared at his apron and silk stockings with round-eyed amazement. He turned to the mistress with a civil little speech of congratulation. Half hidden behind the board, she swept a courtesy, but did not raise her eyes; and the lower part of her face was covered, as if accidentally, by her handkerchief. His lordship walked about among the children, and the Ambroses were delighted; but ever as he moved, Mrs. Henry kept behind him.

"Would you like to hear them sing, my lord?" inquired Mrs. Ambrose cheerfully.

What could the bishop do but say that he should like it?

"A short song, please, Mrs. Henry," said the vicar, as he ranged up to the fireplace, where the bishop stood with his hands behind him.

Mrs. Henry, still on the other side of the great black board, made a sign to the children, who put their hands behind them. Hers were quiet as usual, but they were trembling. The song began; only some common school melody, but it startled the bishop.

"God bless me!" he cried hurriedly, stepping forward, and looking round the black board.

Mrs. Henry had not sung ten notes. Once started, the children went on by themselves, and her voice was silent; but the bishop had heard enough.

Straight round the black board he went with long eager strides, and in another minute he had his hands on Mrs. Henry's shoulders, forcing her to look up.

"I knew it," he said emphatically, while Mrs. Ambrose and I and the vicar stared, and the children sang on noisily.

He was holding her hand in both of his now, as if he never meant to let it go again.

"My lord, you forget!" she said, trying to escape.

"Hester Murray, I remember!" was all he said, but her eyes sank, and the color came flushing over her face. Notwithstanding the quaint cap and hideous gown, she looked beautiful then.

Mr. Ambrose came to his senses first, and covered the situation. Luckily the children had not heard a word.

"My lord, I should like to have your opinion on enlarging the school. We think of throwing out a class-room over there."

And he pointed vaguely to the other end, while all the children turned their heads in the direction indicated, and kept them there while the vicar talked on for three minutes about alterations of which I had never before heard a word nor have I since.

"Ah," replied the bishop in a composed voice, "if you want more accommodation, it will be best gained there. How does it look outside?"

And, followed by Mr. Ambrose, he went through the door, and I ventured to look at Mrs. Henry.

She was standing in her place, and making the children form classes as if nothing had happened. Her face betrayed no sign of emotion; and when I took Mrs. Ambrose's arm and wished her good-afternoon, she replied in her usual voice. The little scene we had witnessed might have been a dream for all traces it left behind. I got Mrs. Ambrose out, and was thankful that the door closed behind us before she made a remark.

"My dear, what does it mean?" she whispered nervously, as we stood in the yard.

"Never mind; only don't talk about it," I replied in the same voice; for the bishop and the vicar were coming round the corner.

"I think you dine at seven, Mr. Ambrose?" said his lordship serenely.

"Yes, my lord."

"Then I will take a little stroll. I have hardly had enough walking to-day, and I should like to see a little more of your beautiful neighborhood."

Without another word he marched away down the hill, and a few minutes later we saw his shovel hat going along the field pathway to the river.

We three went home in silence; but as we parted at the vicarage gate, Mr. Ambrose said: "We always knew that she was a lady."

"O, my dear Justin, I had forgotten that," exclaimed his wife, in a relieved tone. "Then you don't think it is anything improper?"

Heaven knows what terrible things the poor lady had been imagining during our silent walk; but the vicar's ringing laugh swept them all away.

"Improper! No. It's all right, of course; only it's no business of ours."

That was quite true; but nevertheless I could not help thinking of it all the time I was having my afternoon tea, and while I was dressing for dinner; for of course I was going to meet the bishop. And I thought of it again later; for as my fly passed the school-house door, the bishop, who had evidently returned from his walk, was coming out of it, and I heard him say:

"I shall see you to-morrow morning, Hester."

"Don't; you had better not," replied Mrs. Henry's voice.

"Nonsense," said the bishop.

And I privately believe that he ran all the way to the vicarage; for he was there before I was, and only kept us waiting five minutes for dinner.

Two months later her Majesty's inspector came to examine our school, and to his astonishment and our glorification, every child presented triumphantly. We had reckoned on eighty per cent: we got a hundred. But trouble was coming upon us, and our triumph was short-lived. One day Mrs. Henry came to the vicar, and gave notice that she must leave in three months. In vain he entreated her to stay; offered to raise her salary; to do anything in short, if she would only remain. But she merely smiled and adhered to her determination.

They told me almost with tears in their eyes, and I said:

"It's all the bishop."

At which they laughed; but I knew I was right. I had seen, if they hadn't, that a change had come over our mistress since the visitation. She was happier, more at rest; the look of strained weariness, so habitual to her face before, was gone now, and little smiles used to come rippling over the lips that once were set so firm.

I was very sorry to lose her; but I was sure she was going to be happier away from St. Bridget's. And the evening before she left us, when I went to say good-bye, she took hold of my hand and kissed it, and told me all her story.

Her real name was Mrs. Henry Champneys. Her husband, a captain in the 4th regiment, had been killed by an accident in the hunting field; thus the price of his commission was lost, and she found heavy debts, of which she had known nothing—debts which she ought never to have known of at all—ready to swallow up the little money they had left. Her own settlement of a hundred a year was all she had to depend upon, and there were two children—bright handsome boys—to educate and provide for. So she put them to school, and went into training for a certificate; got it without difficulty, and came to St. Bridget's.

"And I had to save every penny, and be very careful, or the dear boys would have suffered," she said; "for I wanted to provide for the future. It was very hard work, and very lonely. I used to write stories in the evenings, and sometimes the magazines would take them, some-

times not; but it was my only chance of getting more money."

"My dear, my poor dear, how could you do it all!" I cried, while the tears ran down my face.

"It was not so very bad, as I had not been used to a very happy life."

I don't know anything about Captain Champneys; but I was sure that he was a brute after that little speech.

"But now you are going to be happy?" I asked.

"Yes, I hope so," she whispered, putting her arms round my neck. "I knew him years ago, before I was married, and—and—he says he never forgot me."

"Of course not. How could he!" I replied, and kissed her again.

"When I am gone, and it is over (I will send you a newspaper), will you tell Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose all about it—they have been so kind?"

I promised to do what she wished, and with another kiss on the little face, and a glance at the shabby dress and quaint cap which I should never see again, I went home, and the next day she was gone.

In four days a *Times* arrived by post. The following was marked:

"On the 23d, at St. John's Church, George street, the Bishop of Southshire to Hester, widow of the late Captain Champneys."

I took it up to the vicarage, and said:

"I told you it was all the bishop."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Acton, eh? Our bishop married! Who is she, I wonder?"

"She was Mrs. Henry," I reply calmly.

"Who?" cried the vicar.

"Mrs. Henry—our schoolmistress."

And then I gave her message, and told them all about it.

"Mind, we must say nothing," said Mr. Ambrose. "It is their secret, not ours."

To which we assented, and therefore it is that no one has known the rights of the story till now, though it happened full six months ago.

## ANNABEL BROWN.

(Concluded.)

I haven't got a mathematical head and these commercial transactions generally bother me. It seemed very much like the same thing, only reversed, but then—was it?

"But is it the same thing, William?" I said again.

"It is precisely the same thing to me," cried William.

"Yes; but to me?"

"Oh, it's much better for you—you don't have to part with the money, you see."

"Yes," I said, "it seems very much better, as you say, but then it isn't quite what we agreed to. I don't suppose the difference is material, but as I have consulted my friend the lawyer in the extensive practice in the city about it, I don't think it would do for me to alter the arrangement he pointed out without asking his opinion as to the alteration."

Now, I could see William was a good deal annoyed about this, but what could I do?

William took away his papers in a huff, and I didn't see him again for a year. Yes, it was at least a year after that Wilkins, the messenger, came into my room when I was having my luncheon—half a pint of porter and an abernethy—and gave me a little bit of crumpled paper done up in the form of a note. "There's a young person in the waiting-room says she'll wait for an answer."

"Dear Malam," said the note, "will you send me a sovereign by bearer, my daughter Annabel, your god-daughter, for a particular purpose? Don't fail."

"I'll see her myself, Wilkins," I remarked to the messenger, and went out into the waiting-room. There are generally a good many people in the waiting-room, and so there were on this occasion—people waiting for an interview with the heads of departments—and there, perched on the table, swinging her legs with the greatest nonchalance, was my god-daughter Annabel Brown. I must say that I felt a little twinge of remorse to think how I'd neglected my duties towards her, never having troubled myself to see whether she was confirmed, or anything of the sort. But she was a fine well-grown girl of seventeen or so, and indeed showed how fast she had grown taller and broader by her garments, which were rather short, and displayed more leg than was altogether seemly, and also didn't meet in front as well as they might have done.

"Well, 'Enry," she said when she saw me—she was immersed in an Army List, but looked up and greeted me with a smile as I entered—"how about the skiv?"

I was a good deal embarrassed, because everybody looked at us and grinned; and young Saunders, who is my junior and loses no opportunity of making nasty remarks about me, happened to be in the room speaking to a friend, and watched us sardonically. You've read, I daresay—I haven't myself, I confess, but I've heard him mentioned in society—of a monster called Frankenstein, who haunts somebody very much. Well, it struck me, this was exactly my case. William was Frankenstein, and here was a Miss Frankenstein, and how many more heaven only knew—a monster-brood, I said to myself, and bit my lips, and was very angry.

"Oh, I understand," said Annabel, misinterpreting my silence. "Usual thing, left your purse at home, eh? Or have you just paid a heavy bill, and not a farthing in the house. All

right, 'Enry; don't apologize, I beg; bless you, I'm used to it."

"Well, as it happens," said I, "Miss Annabel"—I put the Miss in very strong to let it appear that we weren't blood relations—"as it happens, I have left my purse at home."

"Really, now?" she said. "Without any kid? Then, look here; I'll go and fetch it for you."

"I couldn't think of that," said I.

"Then fetch it yourself," said she.

"But I can't leave here till four o'clock."

"Then I'll wait for you," she cried. "Oh, don't mind me! I can amuse myself very well. It's rather fun watching these old blokes pop in and out, like old rats—you know the look of a very old rat when it's worn and gray. Well, you men in public offices look just like that when they get old—not so cunning, through—Oh, no!" said Annabel with a laugh.

And Cropper, our chief clerk—I believe Saunders had sent him in on purpose—was standing just behind us, and—well, he does look exactly like an old rat. But what was I to do with this little terrible?

"But you can't stop here," I said, "unfortunately, I'm afraid; at least, it would be thought not the thing, you know."

"Oh, bother that; but look here then, I'll go and wait for you in the park. Lend me a penny, you shall have it back in a week—honor, you know!—and I'll get a roll and go and feed the ducks, and I'll meet you. Where shall I meet you?"

"Oh, that won't do at all," I said. "Look here," I cried, in desperation; "tell your father I'll come up to-night without fail and see him and explain matters to him."

"And bring the skiv?" she cried.

"Oh yes, yes."

Did I make a mental reservation, then? Heaven forgive me if I did.

"That's a promise, then. You'll come; only you won't see father, 'cause he's in quad."

"Oh, dear," I faltered—Cropper was listening to every word—"Oh, dear, how did that happen?"

"Oh, it's nothing," she said; "only county court. But it's too bad, isn't it? They tell us imprisonment for debt is abolished, and then look how they serve us! It's a shame!" cried Annabel, looking round for the sympathy of the bystanders.

It was more than I could endure. I hurried her out of the building; she insisted on kissing me on the steps in full view of the Horse Guards and St. James's Park, and left me more dead than alive. I was afraid Cropper would say something. I should have hit him if he had, I was so savage, and there'd have been a pretty row.

I went up to Clapham that night, and a most heart-rending scene I witnessed. I'm not good at pathos, so will leave that to the imagination, only adding that I was so overcome that I lent them the "skiv," and promised to see all William's creditors on the morrow and arrange matters with them. And then, as if by magic, the scene changed. My sovereign had set the house a-going again. There was a nice little supper—lamb's-fry and new potatoes, and plenty of capital stout and a bottle of Irish whiskey; and after supper Annabel dashed off some jolly pieces on the old rattle-trap piano; and then I got excited and wanted to dance; and then mother sat down to the piano and played to us, and Annabel and I waltzed round the garden, by the light of the moon. Oh, it was delicious! I never spent such an evening in my life. When the bells struck midnight I was walking up and down that little garden at Clapham with Annabel on my arm, and positively I was making love to her. That was the beginning of it.

I'd always had the impression that I should marry well. All my friends had told me so. "Henry," they'd say, "with your position and advantages you ought to marry well." But here I was, thirty-seven nearly, and no nearer it than when I started. I was beginning to lose the hair on the top of my head, I'd two false teeth; instead of making my way in society, I was fast losing the few friends I formerly had. And then Annabel was delicious. Once having made up my mind that I liked the girl, I was soon convinced that it was my duty as her god-parent to see that she was nicely dressed, and I bought her lots of pretty things, for which she was very grateful, and would give me most sweet kisses. And as she came often to see me on her father's business, the fellows at the office began to talk about her, and chaff me. And Saunders, too, fell most desperately spoony over her; and that decided me. When I found Saunders was looking after her, I went in.

Her father called when I was in this state of mind, and wanted to borrow twenty pounds for a particular purpose—a purpose that would return the money to him fifty-fold hereafter. I thought this a good opportunity to speak my mind. I told him that I would lend him this sum for this one occasion, as I had certain views with respect to his family, which I would explain to him hereafter. But I bound him by a most solemn promise and a written undertaking under a penalty of fifty pounds never again to apply to me for any advance. This was a stroke of policy, you see, because if he'd become my father-in-law, I should have otherwise been continually exposed to the annoying applications. William is a very sensible fellow at the bottom, and took all I said in good part, and pocketed the twenty pounds with many acknowledgements, and protestations.

A few days afterwards I had a note: "Mrs. William Brown requests the pleasure of Mr. Malam's company to a *déjeuner* at ten A.M. on Saturday, the 2d of June." It was the Queen's



birthday as it happened, and a holiday at the office, and I was very well pleased to go down to Clapham, fully making up my mind to speak to Annabel and offer her my hand and heart. I made myself very smart, chartered a hansom cab, determined to do the thing in good style, bought a bunch of flowers for my coat and another bunch for Annabel on the way, and arrived at Clapham a little late—indeed, it was half-past ten. There was a small crowd outside the house of boys and loafers, and the window of the front room was wide open, and I heard the manly voice of William; he was making a speech.

"Ladies and gentlemen—Having drunk the health of my dear daughter and son-in-law Wilks, the next toast I have to give you is the health of a very old and valued friend, to whose kind and fostering care I owe much of the comforts of my life. I am not going too far in saying that probably but for his kindness the feast we are now assembled at would have had no existence. He is not here, alas! My friend holds a position high in the council of his sovereign. You know the critical state of public affairs; I fear my friend is unable to leave his post—"

"Stop, stop!" I cried from the doorsteps, where I had remained transfixed with emotion. "My benefactor!" cried William, suddenly ceasing his address and running to the door to meet me. "Henry," he sobbed, his voice choked with champagne and emotion, "I owe this to you. Benefactor, friend—"

"Oh, stop that!" I cried. "Is she married, Annabel, my Annabel?"

"Dear Henry, yes, to Wilks. All through your kindness to her, she attracted the attention of that good wealthy man. Come and give them your blessing."

"Confusion!" I cried or perhaps the word was stronger, and hurried back to my cab.

And that was the last I saw of Annabel, dear Annabel Brown.

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## THE FAVORITE

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, FEB. 14, 1874.

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### KOSSUTH.

The following interview was printed lately in the *Gazette* of Frankfurt, Germany, to which paper it was sent from Italy:

The following advertisement appears every now and then in the *Corriere de Torino*:

Lessons, in German, English, and Hungarian, given at moderate rates, by

L. KOSSUTH,

164 Strada Nuova.

The advertiser is none other than the once celebrated dictator of Hungary. He is now almost utterly forgotten, even in Hungary. He has

grown very old, and is now so poor that he will gladly give you a lesson for a single franc. This would seem very humiliating for him, and yet he is proud of his poverty. He says: "Three years ago my friends at home, in Hungary, offered me a present of 50,000 florins. I rejected the offer, and never have regretted it, even when I was hungry, and had no money to pay for a fire."

I had the occasion the other day to call upon him. I was no stranger to Kossuth. Twenty years ago he had given me, in London, a great deal of valuable information for my book, "Hungary in 1846." I found him in a very small room in the fourth story of a dingy old building. He sat alone in an easy chair, poring over an old volume. When I entered he did not recognize me. I recognized him and was shocked. What a change these twenty years had produced in his once handsome and interesting face! His hair was entirely white, his cheeks wan and hollow, and his eyes utterly dimmed. His form, once erect and proud, was now painfully bent. He almost groaned as he raised himself to bid me welcome.

He was deeply moved when I informed him who I was. His face brightened as he warmly clasped my hand.

"Oh, yes; oh, yes," he said in German; "I know you now. Everybody forgets me; no one calls upon me; no one cares any more for me. Why should I remember those who once were my friends?"

To this I objected. I asked him how he could be forgotten when his friends in Hungary wanted him to return to his native country and take again an active part in its affairs.

Kossuth smiled very bitterly.

"Oh, yes," he said, "return to Hungary dishonored, with an oath of allegiance to the Hapsburgs who murdered my friends and kinsmen, and who set a price upon my head. I am neither a Deak nor an Andassy."

I asked him how he got along.

"Well," he said, sadly, "were my good children and my poor wife alive yet I would be happy, even in my old age and poverty. But they are all dead, and I am very lonesome. That is what renders my exile, here, where people are so kind to me, so distressing. It would be no better in Hungary. I have no kinsfolk anywhere but in the New World."

"Why, then, not go to America again, where your name is still revered?" I ventured to say.

"Oh," he replied, "I have often been sorely tempted to go back to the United States, but there are two obstacles in the way. In the first place it would cost me more than I have to spare; and, next, I am almost sure that in my present enfeebled condition I would be unable to bear the sea voyage."

All this was very melancholy, and I hastened to change the subject of our conversation.

I showed him the proof-sheets of the chapter on Andassy in my new work on Austria. He put on his spectacles, and, holding the paper in his trembling hand, read carefully what I had written.

Meanwhile I had time to look around in the room. Against the rear wall stood a narrow plain bed. On the walls hung portraits of Mazzini, Rixio, Kisz, and strangely enough, of Louis Napoleon. On the book-shelf by my side I noticed Victor Hugo's "Année Terrible," and Kinglake's "Crimes," and ten or twelve well-worn grammars. On a table, close to the bed, lay a loaf of bread and a plate of dried meat.

To my dismay I found that my glancing around the room had attracted Kossuth's attention.

"Yes," he said, with a smile, "you see for yourself now that I am very poor; and yet, when I left Hungary in 1849, I was charged by all the mean organs of the Hapsburgs with having enriched myself at my country's expense. Do you know what my income was last year? Within a fraction of 800 lire!" (Less than \$200.)

I shook my head sorrowfully. He told me what he thought about the chapter on Andassy, gave me plenty of valuable and interesting information on the subject, and then dismissed me, saying it was time for one of his pupils to make his appearance.

## FOTHERINGHAY.

BY J. JANS.

Few among the retired nooks of England are better worth a visit than this ancient Northamptonshire village, and yet few of as much former celebrity are now so little known. It lies very near the Northampton and Peterborough Railway, but has no station of its own, and in such cases a railway is rather a drawback than otherwise. Few travellers ever notice the beautiful tower, which, however, can be well seen from the line. No high road runs through it now; Oundle has supplanted it as the town of the district; and in consequence Fotheringhay, in spite of its associations, but seldom attracts the tourist. There is not even an inn in the place, which, however gratifying to the clergyman, is scarcely equally so to a thirsty pedestrian. True, one can have excellent bread and cheese at the baker's, subject only to the trifling inconvenience—as beer is "not to be drunk on the premises"—of running out into the street to drink.

Yet the place is accessible enough, especially from Peterborough; and anyone who has exhausted the solitary lion of that somewhat prosaic city—its superb cathedral—may easily take the half-hour trip to Elton station. Nowhere does Peterborough show to such advantage as

from the North-Western railway. The city, stretching away from the river bank, the wooden bridge, inconvenient enough to be a copy of Putney, the forest of railway signals, the tower of St. Mary's, and behind all, the peerless western front of the cathedral, crowned with its many spires and pinnacles, give only too flattering an idea of the place. Soon the undulating hills shut it from sight. Then we pass Castor, known to archaeologists from its church of St. Kyneburga, with a fine Norman (or Romanesque) central tower. Castor station is upon the Roman Ermine Street, which preserves the Latinised form of a name made famous by the saviour of Germany from the Roman yoke, Arminius or Hermann. Here the Nen winds perpetually across the line, much as the Seine does across the Dieppe railway before we enter Paris. Three miles more, and we are at Elton.

From Elton to Fotheringhay is about a mile and a half, over the usual Northamptonshire country, never flat and yet never very hilly, but suggesting the idea of petrified waves. Fotheringhay reminds one that it once has been a town, by its broad and regular streets. All the houses are of one uniform gray colour, as brick is here almost unknown. Some of the cottage gardens even have stone walls instead of hedges. In the centre of the village stands the church, which is approached through an avenue of trees with boughs knotted and interlaced like the well-known Trinity lime-walk at Oxford. It is still a noble and beautiful building, though the choir is wholly gone, which of course robs it of much of its grandeur. It is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and All Saints, and appears former to have been a collegiate church. The nave is wholly of the best period of Perpendicular architecture—that is, before the Perpendicular style attained the rigidity which mars it. From the roof of the aisles spring flying buttresses, which, together with the great size of the clerestory windows, add much to the lightness and elegance of the church. But the most striking part is the massive square tower; so massive, indeed, as to look somewhat disproportioned to the nave, with which its stern solidity and castle-like turrets are strongly contrasted. It is surmounted by a beautiful lantern, which can be seen at a great distance, singularly like—*parvis componere magna*—the famous one of St. Botolph's at Boston. The interior is rather striking than pleasing, as the choir arch has been filled up without an east window, and the huge bare wall, such as is seen in some college chapels, is a serious drawback to a church. But the monuments within the rails are very interesting. They are all of the Plantagenet family. One is to Edward Duke of York, who was killed at Agincourt. The second is to a much celebrated Duke of York, namely, Richard, the great leader of the Yorkist party in the Wars of the Roses, at one time Regent of England, and father of Edward IV., who was defeated and killed by Margaret at the battle of Wakefield. Another is to his wife, the Lady Cicely. All these monuments were erected by Queen Elizabeth.

At the bottom of the street is a picturesque old building, half covered with ivy, which might be thought to be part of the ancient castle itself. This, however, was the great posting inn, in days when the castle made this a place of importance. It has a huge gateway and many Tudor windows, most of them blocked up. Inside the court-yard—it is now a farm-yard—are evident traces of the great gallery which used to run round it. If this gallery were up again, the inn might have been the original of Hogarth's picture. Probably its history would not be preserved, but doubtless it was closely connected with the stirring events which at one time made Fotheringhay to be oftener in men's mouths than any other place in England.

Close to this old inn are the scanty remains of the celebrated castle. They consist only of mound of the keep, traces of the moat, and a few very small fragments of the wall upon the river's edge. Mr. Froude, with his usual carelessness of detail, has wrongly described its situation. He speaks of a small village below and nearer the river, whereas in fact the fragment of wall is not six yards from the water. The Nen is not famous for its beauty in any part; but here it is overhung for some distance with trees, especially weeping willows, under which no river can be ugly. The mound on which the keep stood rises abruptly from the level. Higher up the river, on another slope, is the church, with its noble tower, and behind is the gray-colored village, nearly hidden in trees. The castle, which was a fine Norman building, was both roomy and strong, as might be inferred from its importance. It was built in the reign of Henry I., by Simon de St. Liz or Luz, the second Earl of Northampton. In 1218 it was seized by William of Albemarle, who had been deprived of Rockingham Castle, between Stamford and Market Harborough, by Henry III. He made it the strongest castle in the midland counties, and used to compel travellers to pay him for passport. Afterwards it passed into the hands of the Plantagenets, and became one of their chief residences. It was especially favored by Richard, the duke whose monument was mentioned above. Here, in 1450, was born Richard Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III.

But the event which has given Fotheringhay its undying interest is the tragical end of the unhappy Queen of Scots. Mary Stuart forms in herself no inconsiderable battle-field of history. By some she is represented as a tigress in nature, beautiful and deadly, a compound of every vice named or nameless; by others, as a spotless and persecuted martyr, dying for the sake of religion. Perhaps here, as in

many other cases, truth lies somewhere between the two extremes. But this is by no means the place to discuss Mary's character: we have to do with her only in connection with Fotheringhay Castle. It is a proof of Mary Stuart's energy and ability that castle after castle was deemed too weak to hold her. From Lochleven to Carlisle, Bolton, Wingfield, Tutbury, Chatsworth, Chartley and Tixall she was moved in quick succession. At last her keeper, Sir Amyas Paulet, a harsh-natured but conscientious Puritan, refused to be responsible for her unless she were placed in a stronger fortress. Woodstock, Hertford, Northampton, and other places were named, but rejected for various reasons. At length Fotheringhay, which through the Plantagenets was now Crown property, was approved of. Mary was moved hither in September, 1586, and on October 14 began her trial before the Royal Commissioners. More than two thousand horse were at that time crowded into the town. The trial was held in the Presence Chamber, "a fine saloon, sixty feet long." The Commissioners were well agreed, but a hasty despatch from Elizabeth prorogued the Commission. Ten days later they passed unanimously a verdict of guilty upon her in the Star Chamber. In November she was sentenced to death by both Houses of Parliament. Meanwhile petitions poured in from all quarters for her execution. But Elizabeth could not make up her mind to sign the warrant. That this was through indecision, not kindness, is manifest; for it is clearly proved that she endeavored to tamper with Paulet to take his royal prisoner's life secretly. But when this failed, and when matters were on the very verge of a civil war between the two religions, Elizabeth, being strongly urged by Lord Howard of Effingham, at length signed the warrant. On Tuesday, February 7, Mary was informed by Lords Shrewsbury and Kent that she must prepare to suffer on the following morning.

Of the tragic scene which was enacted on the next day, who knows not the story? Engrossing as it was when told in the baldest language of the old chroniclers, it has last year been still further heightened in interest by the wonderful pen and fiery partisanship of Froude. The elaborately studied part of Mary, the bitter grief of her attendants, and the coarse ruffianism of the Dean of Peterborough, are there wrought into one of the finest pieces of description in the language. The scene had been too trying even for the practised headman of the Tower. His blow fell on the knot of the handkerchief, and scarcely broke the skin. He struck again, this time effectively. At once a metamorphosis was witnessed, strange as was ever wrought by wand of fabled enchanter. The coil fell off, and the false plait. The labored illusion vanished. The lady who had knelt before the block was in the maturity of grace and loveliness. The executioner, when he raised the head, as usual, to show it to the crowd, exposed the withered features of a grizzled, wrinkled old woman." As if anything had been needed to heighten the pathos of the scene, a little lapdog, faithful unto death, was discovered concealed under her dress, and seated itself between the head and neck.

"Every particle of her dress, together with her beads, and the cloth of the block, was forthwith burnt in the hall." Mary's body was taken to Peterborough Cathedral, where, for twenty-five years, until it was removed to Westminster Abbey, it lay in the south aisle of the choir, next to the tomb of Catherine of Arragon. Thus beside one another were buried these two queens, as like in misfortunes as they were unlike in character. Both were interred by the same sexton, that grim old Scarlett, whose famous tablet hangs above the western door of the nave of Peterborough.

And now we come to the last scene in the history of Fotheringhay. James I., who had virtually offered to sell his consent to his mother's execution, provided his own title were recognised, at length thought it incumbent on him to profess abhorrence of the scene of her death. So by his orders Fotheringhay Castle was razed. Only too effectually, as we have shown, has the work been carried out. Still from a rudely done sketch, dated 1718, given in Knight's "History of England," it would seem that much more existed then than now. Time is still continuing the work, and it is a moral certainty before long even the last vestige will be swept away. *Ruinosa oculis herba domos.* England, as Sir John Lubbock has eloquently maintained, will not spend a farthing to save her priceless national monuments. Even now we might say, with little straining, of Fotheringhay—

Then the great hall was wholly broken down,  
And the broad woodland parcelled into farms;  
The hedgehog underneath the plaited bores,  
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
The slow-worm, creeps, and the thin weasel  
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

A TOOTHLESS FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY.—The Washington *Star* says: "A lady and gentleman were in the Vice-President's room in the Senate the other day looking at the large portrait of Washington which adorns the wall, when the lady said: 'Do you know why Washington compressed his lips so?' 'No, I confess I do not,' replied the gentleman. 'It was because,' said the lady, 'he had an imperfect set of false teeth which he could keep in his mouth only by tightly compressing his lips.' 'I never heard that he had false teeth before,' said the gentleman. 'Neither did I until the other day,' replied the lady, 'when I learned it from the best authority that he had.'"



## A WOMAN'S LOVE.

BY FLORIDA HALE.

Buried in a purple sea,  
Wrapt in yearning mystery.  
A precious gem awaiteth thee.

All of dreams and beauty wove,  
Fathoms deep it lieth; love,  
Wouldst thou have thy treasure-trove?

Worth the laurel crown of sages,  
Worth a million pilgrimages,  
Stronger than the rock of ages.

Whiter than a seraph's brow,  
Iridescent with the glow  
Of the prism-tinted bow

Shining in hope's heaven; worth  
Every radiant dream of earth,  
Worth a heavenly after-birth.

For good angels placed it there,  
Left it with a hallowed prayer  
Destined it for thee to wear.

Heaven guards it safe for thee,  
Ever growing richer, rarer;  
Ever glowing freer, fairer.

Till fruition's time shall come;  
Till 'tis folded to its home;  
Cherished, shielded safe from harm,

Wouldst thou now the pearl-gem claim,  
With the shrine from whence it came?  
Shall I whisper thee its name?

Softly, lest some zephyr near  
Should the precious secret bear  
To the loud-tongued Wind King's ear.

It is Love! It waits for thee.  
Shrined within that boundless sea  
Called by Heaven—Eternity.

Take the gift—'tis mine to give;  
All mine own, for it I live;  
Take it and I'll never grieve.

For its richness burdens me;  
All its wealth I yield to thee  
Humbly, gladly, willingly.

Deem it not an errant prize  
Lightly won by glance of eyes,  
Wanton wail of words and sighs.

Born of trust, its life must be  
Still to trust, and trust in thee,  
Leaning on thee yearningly.

Rest it on thy heart, my love;  
Shield it, cherish it above  
Bearest joy thy dreams e'er wove.

Heedless of the warning chime,  
Love shall make the strokes of Time,  
Softer than the pulse of rhyme.

## THE WILLOW FARM.

AN ARTIST'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

My Landlady, Mrs. Pike, was rather a formidable sort of person. She affected a chill front of stare that was dispiriting to a degree. I never looked at that woman without wondering whether she had dined; and if so, whether she had not, by some unhappy mistake, regaled herself upon sour fruit. It was therefore with much internal misgiving that I knocked one evening at her parlor door to apprise her of the fact that I wished to leave; in other words, to give her the fortnight's notice that had been agreed upon between us in the event of my desiring to quit her house.

"Come in," cried Mrs. Pike, in answer to my rap.

That severe being was at tea. I hastened to explain my errand as bravely as possible; and her eyes gleamed coldly at me over a piece of buttered toast.

"The rooms is no longer good enough for you," she said, with freezing sarcasm.

"On the contrary," I replied, in a humble way, "they are too good, ma'am, for I cannot afford to keep them." My humility seemed to soothe her, for she only shrugged her shoulders; and I took advantage of this lull in the wind to lay a five pound note on the table.

"I owe you for three weeks of the present month, Mrs. Pike."

"That's five and forty shillings," she observed.

"And for a fortnight more to come."

"That's thirty."

"Altogether, then, seventy-five. Here are five pounds, ma'am."

"And you want your change, I suppose?" she cried shrilly. "You must sit down and wait till I have done. I can't go and fetch it you now."

I had no wish to hurry my landlady. Whatever may have been her infirmities, Mrs. Pike was an honest woman, and could safely be trusted with twenty-five shillings. I told her to pay me when she pleased, and excusing myself for having troubled her,

"Sit down there, Mr. John Wool," she repeated.

I took my seat in silence, waiting till she had finished her cup of tea and disposed of the toast that still remained on her plate. This I may say was not long work; and after putting her caddy and sugar basin safe under lock and key, Mrs. Pike marched out of the room without saying a word and went upstairs. I suppose she had something else to do than think of my change, for it was a good half hour before she came down again, armed with a receipt and five crown pieces. I had full time during that interval to read right through a weekly paper I found upon the sofa.

It will be well to state here that I was a painter. Not one of those men who daub the fronts of houses with the contents of a bucket, but what I call an "artist." Those who understand this term will please to apply it to me, and endow me with such talents and eccentricities as an artist is commonly supposed to have. My friends agreed in thinking me good-natured; my landlady's opinion of me, based upon the insufficient supervision I exercised over my groceries, was, that I needed looking after. I am not aware that any one wished me harm, though Mrs. Pike, to whose ears it had come that I had learned the rudiments of my art from nature, frequently foreboded that I should come to no good. If I now add that the particular branch of art I studied was portrait painting I think I shall have said about myself all that a reader can care to know.

With regard to the reasons I had for leaving my lodgings, I had thought at first of keeping silence. But reflecting that if I said nothing unjust suspicions might fall on Mrs. Pike I think it best to be frank. The fact is, then, that my room on the third floor was costing me fifteen shillings a week, and that somehow—whether it was my fault or that of the public—my portraits did not sell quite as well as they might have done. I found it difficult to scrape together eighty pounds a year, and still more difficult as my ill luck would have it, to avoid spending a hundred. I am not sure that this is much to my credit, and I beg the pardon of those whom it may concern. But it will be admitted, I hope, that I was only acting in accordance with my duty in leaving a lodging too expensive for my means.

Upon hearing Mrs. Pike's returning footsteps I was about to lay down the weekly newspaper, when glancing at the front page, my eyes fell upon the following advertisement:—

*To Gentlemen of retired and studious habits.—* Lodgings (bed-room with the use of sitting-room) to let in a quiet farm house near Cookham-upon-Thames. If the lodger were willing to take his meals with the family, the terms, board included, would be twenty-two shillings a week. Apply to Mrs. May, Willow Farm, Cookham."

A few days before these lines would not have arrested my attention, for Cookham-upon-Thames is not precisely the place where a portrait painter would think of going to look for customers. But now the case was different, for that morning I had half resolved to give up portrait painting. We were in the year 1855; photography was beginning to spread into every nook and corner; and one need not be modest to own that we who handle the pencil are no matches for the sun in depicting the human face. I had more than once been amazed at my own presumption in asking five guineas for a doubtful picture in oil, when a first-rate likeness, frame and all, could be had everywhere for half a crown. Neither was I quite certain, although sundry of my colleagues maintained the fact with surprising warmth, that the disposition of the public to pay the lesser rather than the greater price, was an evidence of modern simplicity. My only buyers were women—generally old ones; at least they seemed old to me; but perhaps here again was I mistaken, for I never found one who did not indignantly declare that I had made her appear twenty years older than she really was. I think it needful to say that this tendency to exaggerate things had not served to make me extremely popular; and the determination at which I had arrived of abandoning portrait for landscape painting, or for sketching "life and character," was perhaps, after all, only prudent.

I copied out the advertisement in the paper with the idea that two and twenty shillings a week for board and lodging was certainly not dear, and that I would go down to Cookham on the morrow to see if the rooms were still to be let.

"Mrs. Pike entered while I was yet writing, and handed me my change. 'Here are your five shillings,' she said, grimly: then noting what I was about, she added in an icy tone,—

"If you are looking for cheap lodgings in the *Weekly Press*, I hope you'll find them."

And in the same Christian tone she wished me good-night.

## II.

Have I said that I was only twenty-four years old? If not, let me do so now, and explain by this fact how it was that I slept so little on the eve of my going to Cookham. I was not ambitious, nor over greedy of gold, seeing that I was alone in the world, and had only myself to look to; but nevertheless I had often felt ashamed of myself for not advancing more quickly than I had done in my profession, and the thought that by a change of residence, and by taking to a new style of painting more promising of success than the last, I might possibly bring myself a turn of luck, was quite enough

to keep me from drowsiness. I tossed about, thinking of a hundred things which I will not have the impertinence to set down here; for the hopes we form for our own happiness can interest only ourselves, and we have no need to tell them to others. Next morning I rose betimes; so early, indeed, that notwithstanding we were in the month of May the sun had scarce risen when I was dressed; and as quickly as possible I began to pack. I had not many things; but still there were enough to take me two hours in stowing away; for there were knick-knacks I held dear; gifts from relations dead and gone; relics of an old home years since left to be filled by strangers; keepsakes of an only brother who— But we are not talking about that, and I think I had better go on.

It was seven o'clock before I had done, and fully eight before I had breakfasted off the remnant of a leg of mutton, and risked an interview with Mrs. Pike to tell her that I was going into the country, and that if I found a room to suit me I should not return, but merely send for my luggage. I was not sorry to be rid of this part of the business, for Mrs. Pike had frowned severely during all my speech, and it was with much relief that I set off at last for the station; a knapsack on my back, and a travelling easel, campstool, field umbrella, and moustick under both my arms.

The terminus I was bound for was Paddington, and the train I sought, the 9.15, for Maidenhead. Although it was a lovely day—one of those which make the pulse beat high and the blood glow warm—the station was almost empty. A dozen passengers at most had answered to the call of the bright morning, and for a moment I thought I was going to travel alone in my third-class carriage. But just as the train was starting a lagging hurried on to the platform. "What class?" shouted a guard. "Third," was the modest answer. Bang went the door, the carriage began to move, and I had a fellow wayfarer with me.

At first I did not pay much attention to him, for the sight of the country to my town-sated eyes was one so full of novelty and freshness that I felt all absorbed by it. But as the early impressions of green fields and windmills wore off, I remembered that my fellow traveller had raised his hat upon entering. I had, of course, returned his bow, but this form of salutation is so rare between men in England, that I thought of it again and gave a look at my companion to see what sort of man he was.

Now that time and the remembrance of a friendship never to be forgotten have impressed those grave and thoughtful features upon my heart in lines which each day and year grow deeper, I can still recall the face of Michel Terme as it appeared to me in that moment whilst we were yet strangers. He was studiously reading a book—the *Republic* of Plato in the Greek original—and was so intent upon it that neither the joltings of the train nor the draughts of wind through the open sides of the carriage could make him lift his eyes. He seemed to be about thirty; but his slight and stooping frame, together with the unusual thinness and paleness of his face, caused him at times to look much older. He had a slight black beard and moustache, rich black hair, cut very short, and silvered in places above the temples by tinges of gray. His hands and feet were singularly small, and the former were white as those of a woman. His dress was that of a man in the upper ranks of life, but poor and careful. That is, everything in him was scrupulously neat and clean; only his clothes were threadbare from brushing. His general appearance denoted a scholarly, well-bred nature, and impelled me instinctively to respect for and confidence in him.

But I had not yet encountered his glance, and it was not until a sudden gust of wind more violent than usual forced him to look up a moment, that I could judge to the full how mild and earnest was the expression upon his placid features. There was something in his look as irresistibly attractive as the magnet is to steel, and something in his smile—when smile he did at the fixedness of my stare—that was not only heartily kind but positively touching.

"What beautiful weather we have," I said, as a sort of apology for my rudeness; and growing red at finding that my words thus abruptly jerked out were far from having the tone of amiability and deference I wished to infuse into them.

"Yes, indeed," answered my companion in a genial voice, and at the same time he closed his book and gazed it quietly into his pocket.

There was not much in this act; but the unpretending politeness of it did not escape me. In laying aside an interesting work to talk of the commonplace topics of railway gossip with a commonplace stranger, my fellow passenger did no more perhaps than any other well-bred man would have done in his place. But it was the way in which he did this thing that gave the value to it. It was the manner of his smile as he encouraged me by a look to continue my say; and I felt for the first time, as I saw that look and smile, how true it is that politeness and charity are sister-kin.

It is a pity that there should be no other plausible method of beginning a conversation than by exchanging truisms upon the weather. It seems stupid to tell a man that the sun is up when he can well see this for himself; but what is one to do? And was it altogether dullness on my part if I found nothing else to say in my next remark but that the sky appeared likely to keep bright all day?

"Writers have maligned your English climate," replied my companion, turning his eyes to the beautiful scenery around us; and I then no-

ticed for the first time, from a slight foreign tone in his accent, that he was not an Englishman.

I forget what I next said: but it does not matter, for from that moment it was my fellow traveller who talked and I listened. All I did was occasionally to throw in a word, as a man casts faggots into a fire to keep up the flame; but I feared to lose a single syllable of what this foreigner said, for never, either before or since, have I met any one who conversed as he did. All subjects seemed to be familiar to him; and without making a parade of his knowledge, he had the wonderful art of breathing interest upon every word he spoke, and of saying instructive things where another man would only have uttered platitudes. Yet by a strange phenomenon he appeared to be sparing of his words. There was nothing like volubility in his talk. It took him but few phrases to interpret a thought, and his expressions, which were always happy, were also singularly terse. He had the tone or manner of what is termed a practical talker; he seemed to be by nature both shy and silent, as most great scholars are, and his talking must have been rather a task to him than otherwise. But it was of a piece with his courtesy and utter unselfishness. He talked because he saw I wished him to do so; he talked because the few remarks I here and there let fall had insensibly assumed the form of questions; and had these reasons not been sufficient, he talked because he saw by my appearance and accoutrements that I was an artist, and art was a thing so fair and good in his eyes, that he claimed all its votaries, even the humblest, for his friends.

The voice of the guard who shouted "Maidenhead," more loudly than the matter required fell unwelcomely on my ear after an hour's travelling, for I was not prepared to bid so soon good-bye to my new acquaintance. I looked at him wistfully as I gathered up my things, and inwardly deliberated whether I should not go on with him and take a new ticket. But this was to be a day of surprises, and I have rarely since experienced the pleasure I felt when I saw my companion take up his carpet-bag to alight.

"Do we part here?" he asked, when we both stood upon the station platform, "or do our journeys still lie in the same direction? I am going to Cookham."

"And so am I," I exclaimed, glad of the coincidence, and showing it on my face.

"*Tant mieux*, then," he said, gaily, "comes jucundus in viâ pro vehiculo est;" and laughing together at the freaks of Hazard, that eccentric disposer of the ways of men, we set off in company up the high road.

Said I, after we had been walking a few minutes and gained the river bank, which my companion assured me was the pleasantest way: "I shall be obliged to ask you to be my guide, for I know nothing of these parts; and when we reach Cookham, perhaps you will be able to tell me where is the Willow Farm?"

"Truly," answered the stranger, "for I live there."

This made us both stop and look at each other: "Can it be that we are on the same errand?" I asked.

"Not quite, I am afraid," answered my new friend, coloring, "for the lodgings you are going to look for were hired by me yesterday. I was on my way now to take possession."

"It's no matter," I answered; "we will go on, and I shall no doubt find a room of some sort in the village; if not, I can always come back to Maidenhead or Bray."

"I fear you will scarcely find what you want at Cookham," said he, in a sorry tone; "but you must be my guest at luncheon to-day, and Mrs. May, who knows the neighborhood, may be able to help us out of our difficulty."

I thanked him for this proposal, and we resumed our journey. Our road lay all the way along the river path, through fields fresh abloom with early flowers, and grass as soft to the feet as velvet. Opposite, a thick dark road, that stretched its length for three good miles along the Buckinghamshire coast, threw a vast un-moving shadow across the river and made the water seem deep and calm as that of a lake. The occasional leap of some restless jack or perch out of his limpid bed was the only thing to ruffle the smooth surface of the stream, and the peaceful, almost solemn, quietness of the whole scene was scarce broken by the chance song of invisible birds who trod their notes from out of the leafy depths of trees. Above us the sky had not a fleecy upon its dazzling mantle of blue. The sun shone clear and goldlike as became the season, and spring had never seemed lovelier and fairer to me.

My companion broke the silence we had both kept in the presence of Nature, and pointed to a little house standing alone at some hundred yards from the river bank at a quarter of a mile ahead of us. "That's the Willow Farm," he said, "and unless my eyes deceive me I can see Mrs. May and her daughter in the garden."

## III.

If by the word "farm" be exclusively meant a building devoted to the requirements of cattle, the Willow Farm scarcely deserved its name. A simple but pretty house it was, with nothing of the farmer element about it but what concerned those white cows which browsed in its meadow, and the score of sturdy fowls strutting in its doorway. But there were also some pigeons, a many-colored multitude, which covered the sloping lawn by the river, and it was to the wants of these that Mrs. and Miss May were ministering, when, after going through the house by the entrance in the road, we



emerged, from a clean red-tiled kitchen, into the garden.

"Ah, good day, Monsieur Terme," said the elder of the two ladies in answer to my companion's bow, "you will find your room all ready and prepared for you. Rose and I had only just done hanging up the curtains when we saw you in the distance. Let me take your bag and show you the way."

"Madame," said my friend, after making a second bow to Miss May, who at that moment came up and blushed slightly at finding herself before strangers—"Madame, I bring you a fellow traveller, who was bound for your house when I met him on my way. As I am the cause that he has taken his journey for nothing, can you not help me to tell him where he may find a lodging in your neighborhood?"

Mrs. May was a kind person of forty—easy and cheerful in her manners, she yet seemed little like a farmer's wife; but I was prepared for this, my companion having told me that she was the widow of a clergyman, who had once been in affluent circumstances.

"Really," she said, after reflecting a little and shaking her head, "I am afraid there is nothing to be had nearer this than Maidenhead. We would lodge you here with pleasure, but we had only one room to let; the house, you see, is very small."

My new friend turned to me with a generous impulse. "You are an artist," he exclaimed, "if you paint landscapes, such a view as that one has from the bed-room here would be invaluable to you. It is you who must take these lodgings, and I who will go to Maidenhead."

"Come, come," I said, shouldering my paraphernalia again, "I must run off if you talk like that. I have not come here to turn you out of your lodgings, but to have an hour's talk with you. By and by I'll set out on a voyage of discovery, and if you like to accompany me, why please do, but further than that do not trouble yourself about me."

I repeated the same thing to Mrs. May, who looked at us both and then at her daughter Rose, as though to say there was no help for it. The good-natured lady had a stout basket filled with some sort of meal in her hand. She passed it to her daughter, who had one like it, with injunctions to go on feeding the pigeons, and this done she led the way to the house to show my companion his bed-room.

"Will you come with me," said the latter, after making another effort to gain his point, and shrugging his shoulders in true French fashion at his ill success. "You can wash your hands and brush off the dust."

Miss Rose, recovering from her shyness, offered in a pretty way to take care of my things whilst I went up. I therefore laid down my sketching apparatus and knapsack on the grass and followed my new friend and his landlady into the house.

"This way," cried Mrs. May from the first step of a venerable oak staircase dark from age and bright as ebony from polishing, "this way, and mind you don't slip, gentlemen. This staircase must remind you of France, Monsieur Terme, but would you believe that when we first came here I found it hidden under an ugly carpet that had not been taken up I am sure for twenty years?"

The foreigner nodded at the remembrance of his own land, but turning round to say something to him, it appeared to me that his smile was forced and sad. The landlady continued to chatter and, with an air of womanly triumph, when we had reached the first landing threw open a bed-room door. "There!" she said, and this word meant as clearly as possible: "If you can find fault here you must be hard to please."

The Frenchman had not exaggerated the merits of this fine room when he called it invaluable to an artist. It was just such a room as a painter would dream of when too poor to build a house of his own and too luckless ever to light upon a good dwelling for little money. It was all furnished in ancient oak, carved and sculptured like the chairs of an old baronial hall. It had a grand four-post bedstead; a dark solid round table, with a monumental silver inkstand set in the midst. In one corner stood an immense bureau surmounted by an oak bookcase and filled to repletion with secret drawers, sliding shelves, and double pigeon holes. Opposite this, and flanking a divan of crimson cloth, were arranged a stately row of nine high-backed chairs, whilst two other arm chairs more portly than their fellows held and another company on each side of the chimney-piece. This chimney-piece was in itself a marvel. It had no grate, but two lions couchant with bright brass heads upon which to lay the crackling logs. The mantelshelf was of smooth, white, carved stone, and above it a rich trophy of arms surmounted by an emblazoned escutcheon deep set in the wall gave a chivalrous and stern look of antiquity to this knightly apartment. I have forgotten to add that there was a high wainscoat all round the room, and that antlered heads, old matchlocks, and a few admirable paintings in oil of beauties long dead and gone decorated the crimson papered walls. But the prime charm of the room lay in the incomparable view that was to be had through the diamond panes of the deep bay window. For miles the scenery spread in a wide and gorgeous panorama of hill, valley, wood, field, and river. The Thames was so near that on a quiet evening when the sun was down and the twittering of all the garden birds hushed into sleep, the rippling of the stream must have been distinctly audible from the window. And there was so little distance between the house and three or four fields of ripening corn, that in harvest time the voices of the reapers, and in

autumn those of the ploughers, must have come up cheerily through the open casement, to remind one that this was country; far from the stifling atmosphere of cities and in the very midst of the fragrant realm of Nature.

Mrs. May ran about gaily dusting speckless objects, drawing up blinds, and showing the joy of a hostess at the sight of our enthusiasm. She explained to me that the farm formed part of what had once been Cookham Hall, famous in the annals of Parliamentary warfare. Most of the old mansion had been destroyed; the farm had been built over a remnant of it, and we were then standing in the bed-room of one Sir Gavin Hale, long time deceased. The apartment underneath, and very closely resembling it, was part of the old library; it was now used as the farm drawing-room, and the lodger was to have the sole use of it during the day, provided Mrs. May, her daughter Rose, and her son, a school-boy of twelve, were allowed to share it with him in the evening. When the landlady had said all this and ascertained that there was water in the jugs, clean towels on the horse, and a cake of scented "brown Windsor" in the soap dish, she reminded us that dinner would be ready punctually at one, and asked leave to withdraw.

When we were alone the first thing my companion did was to take out his pocket book and to hand me his card. "It's almost time we made acquaintance," he said laughing. "My name is Michel Terme."

"And mine John Wool," I answered; "but," added I, struck by a sudden remembrance, "my name must be less known to you than yours is to me: Michel Terme is the name of one of the first liberal writers of the French press."

He became very red: "Do you know French?" he asked.

"Enough to read the *Débats* each time I go to our Artists' Club in Soho Square," I replied.

"And are you a liberal?"

"Yes, heart and soul."

"We shall be friends then," said he, with a sparkle in his eyes, and he held out his hand to me.

If I have dwelt thus at length upon the details of my first meeting with a man I loved so deeply, I have done so from that feeling which it is impossible to stifle when we are thinking of one who has been our friend, but whose smile we may never more see again on earth. That day when we first met was the first of a year of unclouded happiness to us both; every hour of it has left its impress upon my memory, and I have only to look within myself to see the picture of it engraved upon my heart in colors so bright and lasting that they are as fresh now as they were ten years ago. Michel Terme would not have been a Frenchman had he not, after our shake of the hands, indignantly scouted the notion that I could go and lodge anywhere but under the same roof as he. Mrs. May was again called into council, and then admitted readily that she had another spare room, but that she had thought it too small and plain to offer us. The room turned out, however, to be neither too small nor too plain. An assortment of stray furniture recruited hither and thither from all the rooms of the house; a little scrubbing and a little carpeting had soon given it a habitable appearance. The only question to be decided was who should have it, each of us insisting upon ceding the big room to the other. I was happy enough at last to settle the matter by declaring point-blank that the small room being a garret and hence high situated, commanded a better view of the country than the other, and consequently was more to my purpose. Michel Terme shook his head, but he gave in.

Our first week at the Willow Farm glided by in almost total idleness. Both of us were bent upon working hard, but from its very commencement our friendship became intense; and we found we had as much to talk about as two old school-fellows met after long absence. Michel Terme told me his history after the impulsive manner of his countrymen when they have made a friend, that is, without hesitation or reticence. He was the son of one of the *conventionnels* of the first Republic. His father had married late, and, having suffered persecution for his opinions at the hands of Napoleon I., Louis XVIII., and Charles X., had brought up Michel in hatred of all that resembled arbitrary power. When the old man died the boy was only sixteen, and at twenty the orphan lost his mother. He was then a student of law at the University of Paris, and had just begun to contribute anonymously to a paper of extremely radical views. This paper was one of those that most actively prepared the revolution of 1848, a revolution into which Michel threw himself with the wildest enthusiasm. When it broke out he was twenty-three years old, a member of the French Bar, and already known amongst men of letters for his brilliant style of writing. His ardor, his sincerity, and, above all, his bitter, passionate eloquence, soon brought him prominently forward, and he became one of the most favorite orators in the popular clubs of the "Mountain Party." Thrown into prison by General Cavaignac, after the barricades of June, he suffered two years of confinement at Belle-Isle; but having obtained his liberation in 1850, he offered himself as candidate for the National Assembly, and was elected at the head of an overpowering majority by one of the constituencies of Paris. This honor, modest as he was, Michel could never allude to without coloring and trembling from emotion; and one day, in telling me how the workmen who had elected him had carried him in triumph through the streets of the capital to the Palace of the Assembly, he broke down and burst into tears. Of course, Michel

Terme, took his seat in the House as an uncompromising republican. He was one of that ardent group who prophesied that Louis Napoleon was playing the nation false; and when the *coup d'état* of 1851 occurred, he was amongst the first to be arrested, cast into jail, and subsequently banished. Since that time he had lived in England, earning his living by sending articles to the *Journal des Débats* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He had also published a History of the Revolution of 1848, and had now come to Cookham to be undisturbed whilst he set himself to write a new book on political economy. Such was the tale of his life: a sad and honorable record of brave deeds, honest struggling, and undaunted spirit.

My own history was a very humble one to compare with his. He asked it of me, however, and I told it him. But it was one of twenty words only. Brought up at Rugby, orphan at eighteen, artist at twenty, I had not yet, at twenty-four, found means to distinguish myself. I was still unknown at an age when Michel Terme had been already famous, and, although I was not despondent as to the future, yet it was with some chagrin that I noted how slow as yet my pace towards success had been.

"Work," said Michel, seriously, when I told him this—"Work leads as surely to success as idleness to ruin;" and then taking up a sketch-book of mine, he added gravely, "I am glad that you have given up portrait painting."

"You think it is not my line?"

"I do not mean that," he replied; "but personal independence and portrait painting go ill together. To succeed, you must prostitute your pencil to perpetual flattery. The less true you are in painting others, so much the richer and more popular will you become. You must have no eyes for the wrinkles of old women; you must be blind to the toothless gums of vain old men. You must have the tact to make ugliness seem fair, and insignificant coxcombs look noble and talented. In a word, you must be ever on the cringe, on pain of being deserted and losing your bread. A dreary life this, my friend, for a man who respects himself; and a piteous life too, for it is questionable work at the best to seek fame by pandering to the vanity of one's fellow creatures."

With this he closed my sketch-book, and, looking to the setting sun—for it was evening, and we were in the garden—exclaimed with his usual pleasant smile, "And so it's a bargain, is it not? We begin hard work to-morrow; you with a picture for next year's Academy; I, with my book; and we'll both keep each other to the task."

#### IV.

I laughed when Michel made this compact, for I knew that, as far as keeping him to his work went, my labors would be extremely light and easy. I had never realized what hard work was before I had seen Michel Terme at his books. He was up at five in the morning, and had already been writing three hours before I was out of bed. At half-past nine he went on again till one. When dinner and a half-hour's conversation were over, he gave himself a short walk in my company; but before four he was once more at his desk till tea time. We breakfasted at half-past eight, all together; that is, Michel, Mrs. May, Rose May, myself, and Mrs. May's son, Fred, who only went to school at ten. Dinner was a repetition of breakfast, in so far as the company went, and the tea was like the dinner. Mrs. May sat at one end of the table and Michel at the other, facing her. Miss Rose sat next to me, whilst opposite to us was Fred, a merry boy and great favorite. Those were cheerful meetings. We liked each other, and each of us separately did his and her best to bring good humor to the table. Mrs. May, who, as she owned to us, had in the beginning been rather timid at her first attempt at lodger boarding, soon fell into the spirit of the thing, and set herself to the task of making her home pleasant. To do this, in truth, no efforts were really needed; but it was not the least part of our contentment to note with what cheery kindness our hostess did her best to satisfy our wants and make us feel at ease.

As for myself, I worked everywhere and anywhere. Now in my garret, sketching the Thames and the willows beside it; now on the roof—to the constant alarm of Mrs. May—where I wished to obtain a distant view of Windsor Castle. On the whole, I worked well, however; for when the daily sketching, which I did as practice, was over, I invariably toiled for two or three hours or more, at my canvas, spurred to exertion as I was by the never-failing encouragement I obtained, at every step forward, from Michel Terme. Tea was the signal for definite rest. We took it in the drawing-room, and when the table was cleared, we all spent our evening in company. At times Rose May sang and played to us on the piano; at others, Michel or I would read aloud, whilst Mrs. May and her daughter sewed. We finished two or three shelves full of books in this way—Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer, Shakespeare, all the cream of our British writers, in prose and verse, taking their turn for our benefit. It was pleasure to hear Michel Terme, on such occasions, throwing all his soul and eloquence into his voice, to do honor to the works of his literary colleagues. He was one of the very few Frenchmen I have heard honestly own that our English literature is superior to that of France. He admitted the fact as an axiom about which there could be no doubt, and was thoroughly British in his admiration for our poets, and in his respect for the high moral tone of our novelists.

It has been said that happy nations have no history. This is true also of men, for as happiness consists in the smoothness of an unruffled life, its record is usually but a repetition of the same scenes daily renewed in uneventful monotony. Such being the case, I should not have thought of taking up my pen had my stay at Cookham remained to the end what it was at the beginning, for, as a painter, I know that cloudless skies present but little interest in a picture. But, be the lane good or bad, it must be very long if it have no turning, and the lane that I had followed, the quiet path, free from rut and stone, was not destined, any more than other paths, to remain unbroken to the last.

I have not yet spoken of Rose May, who, living under the same roof as Michel Terme and I, had by necessity become our daily companion. She was, in every sense of the word, a lovely English girl, with bright auburn hair, clear blue eyes, and fair pink features, made pinker still by the pretty, frequent blushes of maiden coyness. Having lost her father when only nine, and having never before or since this bereavement been absent a single day from her mother's side, she had few acquaintances, knew little or nothing of the world, and was as completely pure in mind and spirit as it is possible for an angel or a saint to be. Her good-hearted mother had brought her up with the winning-kindness of an elder-sister. But the father of Rose had been a contemplative, scholarly man, and his daughter had inherited his nature. She had not the ready cheerfulness of her mother, but she had her mother's exquisitely gentle smile, her warmth of heart, and her soft, amiable, and touching voice. She was just eighteen when Michel and I came to stay at Cookham. She had been admirably educated, and without possessing those vast stores of knowledge which are thought requisite to make a learned man, she yet knew more than the majority of women, as was evident by the serious intelligent tone of conversation. From the first moment when we saw her, Michel Terme and I both felt that she was a girl of neither ordinary beauty, nor ordinary goodness, and my friend, more keen in his appreciation of character than I, remarked that there were rays of genius and poetry in those quiet eyes of hers.

Notwithstanding her shyness, Rose May was not long in becoming fast friends with us. A little awed at first, as it seemed to me, by Michel's grave demeanor, she soon felt attracted, as I had been, by the warmth of his smile, and the potent charm of his manner. Besides, there was that other attraction, all-powerful in the eyes of women, I mean the triple halo of courage, fame, and misfortune that encircled my friend's brow like a crown. Often did I watch the earnest look of admiration that lit up the young girl's eyes, when led by chance to speak of 'the past, the exile dwelt on his lost illusions, on the dreams he had formed for his country's freedom, and on what those dreams had cost him. The child's breast would heave at such moments, the fervent eloquence would bring a flush of emotion to the sweet face, and Michel, proud of the innocent homage, would thank her by a look such as gratitude itself might envy. With me, although none the less confident and friendly, Rose May was not the same as with Michel. She would reason and playfully argue with me, which she never did with him. But, on the other hand, I do not think she would ever have come to me to confide a sorrow or ask for advice, whereas I am sure that from the moment when she first began to know him well, she would have appealed to Michel without fear, in any hour of trouble, as she would have done to a brother or a father. The reason of this is plain; Michel Terme was a hero in her eyes, whilst I was only a man.

And so time glided on, linking us all faster to each other every day, until a year had slipped by, and the cup of our happiness, replenished with the dews of this fresh life, was almost full to the brim.

It was then that happened what I am now going to relate.

#### V.

One day—twelve months had passed and the month of May had come round again—I was painting in the drawing-room, where I usually pitched my easel of an afternoon. Rose and her brother Fred were seated not far from me near the window. I had taken to teaching the boy how to draw, and the one pleasure of his life had become the sketching of men and dogs with a pencil. That day was a half-holiday, and he had five clear hours before him, during which to indulge his fancy undisturbed. Rose had been gathering flowers, and was occupied in sorting them for a vase. Michel was upstairs in his room hard at work; we had not seen him since dinner-time.

Mrs. May came in to fetch something whilst we were all three busy in our labors, and, as she entered, she threw a glance around her to see if Michel was with us. Not finding him, she stopped near me and said gravely, "Mr. Wood, you must really tell Monsieur Terme not to write so much. Did you see to-day at dinner how pale he was? It seems he had been up at his desk for the last two nights. You know, he will fall ill and kill himself if he continues to lead such a life."

I nodded despondingly, for I had tried that very morning to lure Michel away from his books, but without success. He had an important essay to finish, he had told me, and he feared to lose the thread of his demonstration, if he allowed himself to be diverted by any other subject. Poor fellow, he did not like to tell me



that he worked thus because he was in pressing need of money. He had brother refugees relying on him for their bread. Some of these men had families, and Michel Terme, who would have been well off had he kept for himself all he earned, performed prodigies each day, that his unhappy fellow countrymen might not feel the pinch of want. I found out all this later, but I more than suspected it then.

"I will do my best again, Mrs. May," said I, rising to leave the room, "but I am very much afraid it will be of little use."

"Try, at all events," she repeated, "for I am getting anxious about him." As I passed by the table to go out, I observed that Rose May's eyes were fixed upon me with a strange expression. I noticed also that an unusual pallor had overspread her face. Surprised at this sudden change, I lingered until her mother had left the room, to ask her if she was ill; but before I could speak she had said quickly, but with an accent such as I had never heard before, "Tell your friend that he must not overwork himself; men like him are too few in the world."

I mused upon this as I went upstairs, and full of the words when I reached Michel's room, I thought I could not offer him a better inducement to come downstairs than by repeating them to him. I therefore gave him the message simply.

He looked up at me and blushed scarlet; but greatly to my wonder he laid down his pen at once, and abandoned his work. "Did she really say those words?" he asked of me as we came to the door, and when I had answered him, "Yes, upon my word," he seized my hand and pressed it: "Merci, mon ami," said he, speaking in French, as he always did under strong excitement, and I fancied as he said this that he looked ten years the younger.

"You see, you have more power than I, Miss May," cried I, smiling, as I led in Michel, "that which an hour's persuasion on my part had failed to accomplish two words of you have done in a minute."

Rose May had risen trembling and was casting her eyes on the ground. Her paleness had given way to a blush as deep as Michel's when I had borne her own words to him. Something like a light flashed across me. I looked at them both and then the scales fell from my eyes; I felt I was one too many in the room, and I went out to leave them alone.

I walked straight before me to the garden, to the fields, to the river. I did not look around me as I went; I did not stop to examine my way, I walked straight on. I had a vague idea that it was fine, that the heavens above me were blue, that the grass beneath my feet was cool and fragrant, and the nature was gay and smiling on that day. I did not watch the flight of time nor count the hours; I allowed them to flit unheeded by, and night itself, with its tall grey shadows, came down to earth, without my noticing it. Everything around me seemed to wear a veil; the landscape was steeped in mist, the song of the birds struck faintly on my ears as the tongues of bells when muffled. And still I sped on my way, cold at the heart without knowing why, feeling as though something had been torn by a rude hand from my breast, but unable to know or yet to guess what it was that was thus afflicting me.

Eight o'clock struck from the tower of a neighboring church before I thought of stopping. I gazed around me; I knew that church. It was there I came every Sunday with Michel and Mrs. May, and—yes, yes, I had been there only the day before. But it appeared to me as though the church had worn a different look then. I had seen it in all weathers, and always had it seemed fair and holy to me. It looked damp and repulsive now, although the moon was up and beaming with all its brightness on the ivy-grown roof and steeple. I fled from it shuddering as from a charnel house.

I sat down on a new cut marble tomb where six weeks before had been laid a young boy, gone to sleep before his time. It was yet too early to go in. They—they at the farm I mean—would still be up, and I did not want to go in until all the house was silent. I lay down on the tomb and thought of the child who slept beneath. Was death really but sleep, or was the spirit of that young body roaming amongst us still upon this weary earth! How fresh and soft the grass was, and how well that child must sleep! His brow was not throbbing like mine, his hands were not hot and burning. Cool as the marble above him, his young limbs were at peace. Yes, I know they call that the cold of death; but if death was repose, why had that child been called to rest before me? Why had they not laid me in his place? I who had no one to care for me?

The moon was at its height when I rose. Midnight was past, and I walked back slowly through the fields on my way to the farm. I knew now what it was that had been torn from my heart—it was a dream: I knew now what it was that was drooping lifeless and cold within me—it was hope.

I feared to meet those looks which every day had gladdened my heart and made my spirit buoyant. Reaching the house, I crept upstairs like a malefactor, quaking at the sound of my own steps, trembling to meet a well-known form, and falling at last at the foot of my bed, tearful, half-dazed, and racked with emotion. I was jealous of my best, my only friend.

How, and how long, had that love possessed me? It had crept upon me unawares, twisting its branches around my heart, as the tendrils shoot of a strong young vine, gaining in strength each day, and weaving their enthralling network until every fibre had been made fast. And this had been done without my feeling it; for, calm and secure in my quiet life, I

had feared no trial, had dreaded no rocks upon which my fair-sailed visions could ever run and wreck. Michel! Ah, yes; but Michel was my brother; he was not for me what other men are; and I had fancied that she too would never look upon him but as a brother. Each time they smiled I had noted their smiles with joy and without alarm. It had seemed to me that the smiles she gave to him were not the same as those she bestowed upon me. Mine seemed sweetest; yes—I see it now—because they were mine; but why could I not discern in time that love was on her lips when she spoke to him, whereas friendship only was all she ever gave to me.

There are hours which we mark in our memory with a brand of fire. Such were the hours of that night in May. When morning broke I was no longer young. My youth had fled between the setting and the rising of the sun; sorrow had employed that night to make a man of me.

I forget what excuse I made when I saw them all. I think I forged some story about a friend I had met, in order to explain my late return. Mrs. May observed that I looked unwell—"These sudden meetings with friends we never expected to see are often trying," I said in reply; "they tell upon one's nerves."

"Upon one's heart, you mean," said Michel, with his loving smile. "Brave garçon! your nerves are sound as ever, but it's your heart that's so tender and good."

I hurriedly left the room, for I had not yet schooled myself to bear my cross; my wounds were still bleeding; that new-born jealousy had not yet been torn with a resolute hand. I needed time and solitude; with these, and a strong will, a man may yet hope to subdue himself.

During the next fortnight I kept my room. I gave myself out for ill—as truly I was—and pleading a need for rest, I steadfastly vowed that I would remain alone until I could trust myself to act as I should without faltering. Michel was never to suspect my secret—that must remain a thing between my heart and me; and my face must be trained to such stoical calmness that not a shade nor a look upon it should ever reveal the truth. This silent hidden struggle against my inner self was not devoid of a certain grim and stubborn joy. The fiercest enemy that a man can have is his own passion, and if it be often torture and death to struggle against this foe, there is yet a stern pride to be gained as the price of victory. I strove therefore with such strength as God had given me, until resolution had pressed its iron stamp upon my lips. I then opened my door and went downstairs again.

I found them in the drawing-room, seated very near each other, and both revising together the proof-sheets of Michel's new book, which had been sent to him from Paris. They gave a cry of pleasure, and ran towards me with hands outstretched as soon as I made my appearance, and all thoughts of work were laid aside at once for that day. Rose May ran up to fetch my straw hat and my stick, and insisted that we should make a holiday of it by spending our afternoon on the river. Michel suggested a water excursion to Windsor; Mrs. May added the proposal of a picnic in the Home Park—Michel and a waterman were to row, Fred was to steer and Rose for the occasion was to don a new muslin dress and a bewitching hat of white rice-straw, that had just arrived from London.

They took me for the gayest of the party: so well (as I thought!) did I play my part. I assented to everything; threw myself into their amusements with such apparent spirit that they were pleased and delighted at the thought they had had of making this break in our life of work. Fred kept us all laughing like children with his merry jokes and schoolboy humor. Our waterman, too, happened to be an oddity, and contributed his share to our fund of mirth by novel views upon men and things. Those who met us upon the river must have taken us for a wedding party, and me with my white waistcoat and the pink in my button-hole—it was Rose who had placed it there—for the bridegroom. What would they have thought had they known that the man who was laughing the loudest in this joyous crew—yes, the man who looked like the bridegroom—was feeling his head split with despair and pain, and whilst gazing upon the water that washed its clear ripples round the bows of the boat, he was thinking of those whom, happier than he, that river had engulfed, and was envying them their weed-grown bed, where no sound of human grief could wake them.

If Providence had purposely wished to wring my heart by showing me more fair and lovely than ever the prize I had lost, it could not have endowed Rose with more grace and beauty than she wore on that day. If a pitiless fate had resolved to make me hate my friend in spite of myself, and in spite of my vow, it could not have made Michel look more happy, more hopeful, and more thoroughly confident.

But I did my duty; I stifled feeling; and Rose as she leaned on my arm in Windsor Park (out of sisterly attention for the "invalid"), could imagine that there was not in England a man more happy than I. She talked to me of my labors during the past year, of the progress I had made in my art, of the success which a picture of mine was at that very moment obtaining at the Royal Academy's exhibition in London. She took out of her little pocket a small parcel of favorable notices she had cut out of different papers, and prettily tied together with blue ribbon. She showed me the lines where John Wool was spoken of as a "rising artist, destined to become one of the glories of the English School." And in a gay

whisper confided me the secret that she had intended asking me to take them all to London—her, her mother, and Michel—to see this famous picture they had watched me work at. And all this she said in a tone to make me mad. Her pretty speech and happy smiles formed something fascinating beyond the power of words to tell, and I felt hopelessly miserable.

For no, it was not possible to deceive myself. I could see that there was merely innocent friendship in all her words. It was not love. I could discern the difference when I talked of Michel, and when then, of a sudden her arm pressed closer to mine, whilst her upturned face, attentive to catch my words, flushed as I praised her lover. I was speaking of how much I owed my friend. I was honest and sincere in that moment. I remembered the good his brave example and manly counsels had done me, and out of the fulness of my heart I spoke the truth. I said I loved him as a brother, and would gladly lay down life or happiness if either could give him content.

Whereupon she stopped me, and looking at me with her eyes brimful of tears, said: "If I were a man and wished a friend, I would have him be like you."

## VI.

That day passed uneventfully save in one respect, that on coming back by river to Cookham towards nine o'clock at night, Michel was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which obliged him to abandon his oar. I took his place, although he protested against my doing so, after "having been ill so long;" but I entreated to have my way, for I had been struck by something peculiar in his cough, and although he assured us it was nothing, yet I felt, without knowing why, a vague sense of anxiety.

(It seemed to me that when I had gained my point, and was insisting upon wrapping up Michel warmly, Rose May's eyes were fixed upon me in gratitude; and I am certain that when I took off my own scarf to put round my friend's throat, I heard a voice—not Michel's—whisper "Thank you.")

The next day we resumed our homely life, Michel toiling hard and ceaselessly as before to publish the book, for which four hundred pounds had been promised him; I working to drive thought away and to keep my spirit in subjection. Work is, perhaps, the most powerful of all balms to sorrow; happy those who can employ it.

But whereas I had hoped that each day would help to alleviate my pain, it was not without a fearful heart-ache that I began to see how each day, on the contrary, I needed more work to keep myself from wavering. Also, I noticed that I was daily losing in bodily strength, that my face was becoming wan, my eyes haggard, and that my features instead of preserving a calm, collected look, were fast assuming an appearance of settled wretchedness. Michel attributed this to overwork, and implored me to take some rest. But he too, was strangely altering, and I, as anxious about him as Rose was, complained that in thinking of others he was neglecting himself. Ever since the boat day that cough, which I had once or twice noticed before, but never thought at all serious, continued to hold and torment him. He coughed a great deal of mornings; I could hear him, through the floor of my room, which was situated just above his; but he would laugh my fears away when I spoke on the matter, just as I did too, when he told me that something was up with me, and that I was only the ghost of my former self. Mrs. May, who observed us both, ended at last by looking grave. She remonstrated earnestly, first with Michel and then with me. To each of us secretly she said that the life of the other would be endangered if this continued, and by this means obtained that each of us separately would persuade his friend to take a ten days' holiday in London. Excellent kind-hearted woman, how far you were, with all your motherly tact, from guessing the truth!

It was settled we should start as soon as Michel had done revising his proof-sheets, of which he had about a hundred more in hand. Mrs. May agreed to accompany us and to take Rose with her. She had an aunt living in London, and this occasion would be a good one for paying her a long-promised visit. It would also furnish Rose with the opportunity of seeing the great city through which she had only passed once when a little girl; so that the trip, as things were arranged, seemed destined to be a godsend to everybody. I wrote to my old landlady, Mrs. Pike, to ask her if she could provide my friend and me with a bed-room for fifteen or twenty days. It may seem surprising that I should have done this in face of the wholesome terror this worthy person had always inspired me with; but man is a being of capricious ways, and I felt as though my landlady was a sort of old friend, now that my heart, more impressionable to kindness, could detect the evidence of a certain rough affection in the way she had formerly bullied me. I received the following note from her in answer to my letter:—

"MR. JOHN WOOL, SIR—

"Although it has always been a wonder to me, that a young man, brought up in a Christian land, and taught to read his Bible, should think of earning his bread by painting, yet it has been a mercy to me to reflect that you was always regular in paying your rent, and that saving your forgetting to lock up your tea and sugar whenever you went out, you was otherwise well-behaved. Which had it not been so, I being a respectable woman, you never could have found a lodging in my house, Mr. Wool.

"Mr. John Wool, Sir, your room happening to be empty since last Tuesday week, and another beside the same, owing to a gentleman who played the flute on Sunday receiving his notice from me, I have no objection to taking you and your friend in—which you'll please to think I should not have done such a thing for everybody, seeing that you write that your friend is a foreigner, and that foreigners not having had the benefit of Christian training, are commonly dangerous company for women as respect themselves.

"Your obedient Servant,

"JANE ANNE PIKE."

This matter settled, there was nothing to do but wait the few days until Michel was ready; and make our preparations for starting. It seemed to me, that we set about this, in a very cheerless spirit, and more like people about to part on the eve of a lengthy voyage than like friends setting off on a pleasure trip. Perhaps it was merely by hazard, but I think myself it was from a vague and undefined presentiment, we avoided the subject of our coming journey. Mrs. May would occasionally touch upon it with a semblance of pleasure, but her gaiety was forced and found no echo either with Michel, with Rose, or with me. Our cheerful evenings in the drawing-room had gradually become silent and oppressive. There was something hanging over us that we could not dispel; a secret dread of coming evil which neither of us could have explained nor yet accounted for, but which made us fear to hear each other speak, lest we should find in one another's words some stray reflection of our gloomy thoughts.

Michel's health was worse; his cough was becoming more harsh and hectic, and Rose May, to my alarm, was fast losing her color too. A settled melancholy had fastened upon her; the sight of Michel's decline was blanching her face, and slowly but surely dimming those bright eyes which but a little while before had beamed so clear and peacefully. Her smile was gone, and when she looked at Michel, who, struggling manfully against his illness, continued to tell us that there was nothing to fear, the convulsive quivering of both her lips was scarce controlled by the efforts she made to hide her anguish. This new cause of grief added to the fearful apprehensions I already had about Michel Terme, was making the burden of my own sorrow too heavy to be borne. My sufferings were of the kind to which uncertainty lends double bitterness. I felt that the time had come to know the truth. I resolved to find out what the matter really was with Michel; to clear up my terrors about his state of health; to fathom his feelings with regard to Rose; and if his heart, as I truly thought, was as wholly hers as mine was, to do my best to bring about their marriage.

Michel had only ten more pages to revise, a couple of hours' work, at most, and we were to start for London in two days. We were all gathered together, each doing something to while away the evening, but all of us more sad and silent than usual. A few words I had ventured once or twice in hopes of inducing Mrs. May or Rose to speak had been suffered to fall unheeded, and the scratching sound of Michel's pen on the printed paper of the "slips," was all that could be heard in the room. At a quarter to ten I laid down my book, and the evening being clear and fine, I walked out for a moment on to the lawn to make up my mind, by a few minutes' solitude, for the resolution I had taken of speaking to Michel that very night as soon as he should have retired to his room. I could not have been absent more than ten minutes before I heard a piercing cry of alarm, and the same moment Mrs. May appeared pale and breathless at the window, and called to me in a terrified voice to come in: "Be quick, Mr. Wool, there's an accident happened; Monsieur Terme has fainted!"

In less time than it takes to write it I had rushed back to the house, my heart throbbing so violently that I could hear it beat. Michel was lying on the floor quite senseless; Mrs. May was raising his head, and Rose very pale, was loosening his necktie. "Run off at once for the doctor," I cried hurriedly to Fred, who was standing there dumbfounded; and I knelt down by my friend in a state of mind impossible to describe. I am no doctor, and even had I been, my science could have stood me in little stead in such a moment. All I could do was to lay my own trembling hand upon Michel's forehead, then to take him up in my arms as if he had been a child, and to carry him to his room. I laid him upon his bed and tried all the restoratives that custom prescribes; but it was not until half an hour—half an hour during which not a word escaped the lips of either Rose, Mrs. May, or me—that he opened his eyes and looked around him. And then—and then, with that fatal instinct which unveils our sight when Death is raising its hand to strike one of those we love, I knew that I was about to lose my friend.

He turned his eyes with a gentle tender look upon me, and with a smile that rent my heart—"Do not cry, pauvre ami," he said; "nay, you must not sob so, for I myself have need of all my courage to leave you." He twined his arms round my neck and drew my head to his breast. "Pity, pity, dear friend," he faltered, "you don't know what your tears are costing me—you must not unman me in such a moment." His voice here sunk to a whisper, "Closer, closer to me, my brother," he murmured, softly, "I wish to speak in your ear. John, you should not have kept your secret from me. It was good and noble to conquer your love for friend.



ship's sake; but—but," here he pressed his lips to my cheek and kissed me—"but you ought not to have thought that I could ever accept that sacrifice—you love her, dear boy, and I knew it."

God be witness of the grief I felt when I heard these words and found that all my efforts at self conquest had been vain, and that I had betrayed my secret. He saw the expression on my face and guessed it. "No, no," he whispered, "you must not think that—I saw it—because—because"—here he paused whilst a faint blush overspread his features—"because I was your friend, and that a secret, however well guarded, cannot escape the eyes of affection."

At the moment we heard footsteps on the stairs, and Rose, who had left the room with her mother to fetch some stimulants for Michel, returned, showing in the doctor.

He was a good and wise man this doctor, honest, and unapt to disguise his thoughts. When he looked at Michel I read his verdict in his face. He spoke but a few words and then left the room. On the landing outside I stopped to question him; I did not see that Rose had followed me, and he, not thinking the poor child's presence a reason for attenuating the truth, answered with a mournful shake of the head: "The consumption has been lingering many months; some violent emotion, or else some secret sorrow, has hastened the progress of the disease; his state of danger can have been no secret to Monsieur Terme, and had he called me in three, or even two months ago, I might have saved him. It is too late now. He will die."

It was then that I turned round on hearing a stifled groan and caught Rose in my arms as she was falling to the ground, crushed by the weight of these words. But the shock had not left her senseless. "Let me go in," she said faintly, as I raised her up, "it's nothing, it will pass away in a minute;" and she disengaged herself from my arms, opened the door of Michel's room, and walking up to his bed-side, knelt down beside it, bending her head over her lover's hand. Mrs. May, too much afflicted to speak, was standing fearful and speechless at the foot of the bed. Michel appeared asleep, and the silence of death, whose fearful shadow was drawing near, had already settled upon us.

What would I not have given in that minute if heaven had granted me the power of lighting up again within that noble body the fast flickering spirit that was preparing to take its flight? What would I not have given if my life had been accepted as a sacrifice for him whose whole existence had been trial, disappointment, and self-denial. There is a bitter rally in these freaks of death, that mow down before their time the gentle and good; there is a cruel sarcasm in those cold caprices, that allow the idle and useless to remain here on earth, whilst those who are the credit and pride of humanity are rudely snatched away.

I passed that night praying earnestly on my knees. It was the sight of Rose, who, watching by her lover's side, had first murmured the name of God, reminded me that the judge who dispenses life and death will sometimes stoop to mercy. But our prayers were vain, notwithstanding that with all the fervor with which hearts in sorrow ever cried to heaven, we all three implored for him we loved. The break of dawn found us still on our knees, and we only rose when the first white ray of the rising sun falling upon Michel's bed, caused him slowly to awake out of that peaceful slumber which had prepared him for his eternal rest.

He tried to sit up, but weakness prevented him, and I encircled him with my arms to give him support. "Thank you," he murmured, faintly; and then, after an effort to keep from coughing, he laid one hand upon my shoulder, and said in a low tone: "Dear friend, I have just had a dream, but you must not hear it alone." The dying man made a sign for Rose and her mother to approach; and when they were sufficiently near to hear him: "Yes, I have had a dream," he continued, "I dreamed that being of a sudden called to take a long journey, my only sorrow at setting out was, that I must leave two beings whom I loved with an equal love, and this thought afflicted me. But I turned to them both in this moment of sadness, and asked them if they loved me with the same deep love with which I loved them; and when they answered me yes, and when I saw by their eyes that what they said was true—I asked them—I entreated them to love each other as they loved me—and when they had promised me that they would, and that in memory of me and the love I bore them, they would live united all their lives; then I joined their hands together, and—I kissed them both—and I thanked them for allowing me to depart happily."

The kiss of his lips was still warm on our brows when one of the bright heralds from the angel host appeared with a radiant face to beckon my friend to his home. And having asked me to look at that messenger, whose hand, invisible to me, was held out to bid him come, Michel laid his head upon my breast, and with a calm smile gave up his soul as pure and spotless as he had received it.

## VII.

I have but very few more words to tell. In the quietest corner of Cookham churchyard I chose the sleeping-place of Michel Terme. If ever you visit the spot you will know it from the other tombs around by the crowns of "immortelles," which certain poor Frenchmen who lived on Michel's bounty go each year on the

10th October to lay upon it. It is a tomb with a marble slab, surmounted, according to the Roman Catholic Custom, with a white cross. It bears, engraved upon it, the following words:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
MICHEL TERME,  
WHO DIED ON THE 10TH OCTOBER,  
1856.  
ALSO TO THAT OF  
ROSE MAY,  
WHO DIED ON THE 20TH OF THE SAME MONTH,  
IN THE SAME YEAR.  
—  
CRAVING REST.

Oh! for the leisure to lie and to dream  
By some woodland well, or some rippling stream,  
With a cool green covert of trees overhead,  
And fern or moss for my verdurous bed!

To rest and trifle with rushes and reeds,  
Threading wild berries like chaplets of beads,  
Letting the breeze fan my feverish brows,  
Hearing the birds sing their summery vows.

Oh! for the leisure to lie without thought,  
Upon the haunts of nature, if but for a day,  
The hammers that beat in my temples at rest;  
Calm in life's atmosphere, calm in the breast!

To loiter or saunter, to laugh or to weep,  
Waken the echoes, or silence to keep,  
With no human being at hand to intrude,  
Or question the wherefore of manner or mood.

Oh! for such leisure to rest and to stray  
In green haunts of nature, if but for a day,  
Through leaves to look at the sky from the sod.  
Alone with my heart, my hopes, and my God!

All the Year Round.

## THE TALES OF BELKIN.

FROM THE RUSSIAN  
OF ALEXANDER SERGUEVITCH PUSHKIN.

### THE PISTOL-SHOT.

#### I.

We were quartered at ——. The daily routine of an officer in the army is not unknown. Drills and the riding school in the morning; dinner at the commandant's quarters or in a Jewish eating-house, and cards and punch in the evening, constitute the day's work. There was no society at —, nor were there any marriageable girls; we used to meet at each other's rooms, where only men in uniform were to be seen.

One civilian, however, was admitted within our circle. He might have reached the age of five-and-thirty, and we therefore looked upon him as being greatly our senior in years. His large experience secured to him a certain amount of difference, and his usual moroseness, his stern and sarcastic disposition, exercised a powerful influence over our youthful imaginations. His past career seemed shrouded in mystery. Though bearing a foreign name, he was apparently a Russian. He had served at one time in the hussards, and had even been fortunate in professional advancement; none of us knew the reason why he had retired from the service and taken up his abode in this wretched neighbourhood, where he lived penuriously, and yet extravagantly; he invariably went out on foot, and he was always seen in a black surcoat the worse for wear, but at the same time he kept open house for all the officers of our regiment. Truth to tell, two or three dishes, cooked by an old pensioner, constituted his dinner, but, on the other hand, champagne flowed at his table. His circumstances and his income were unknown, and none of us presumed to ask any questions about either. His only books were works connected with the military service, and some novels which he willingly lent, never asking to have them returned, but neither did he give back those which he had borrowed. His chief pastime consisted in pistol-practice. The walls of his apartment were well riddled and perforated like a honey-comb. A valuable collection of pistols formed the only luxury of his humble habitation. The degree of perfection he had attained in this art was inconceivable, and had he required to shoot at a pear on any one's head, not one of our fellows would have hesitated to offer himself. Our conversation often touched on the subject of duelling. Silvio (as I shall name him) never joined in it; and when asked whether he had ever had occasion to fight, would answer drily that he had; but he entered upon no details, and it was evident that these and similar questions were distasteful to him. We concluded that the recollection of some unfortunate victim to this dreadful accomplishment troubled his conscience, the idea of cowardice never even suggesting itself. There are people whose exterior alone suffices to disarm such suspicions. An unexpected occurrence disconcerted us all.

Some ten of us were one day dining with Silvio. We drank as usual,—that is, excessively,—and after dinner we endeavored to prevail upon our host to be the banker in a game at faro. For some time he persisted in declining,

for he seldom played, but at length he ordered the cards to be brought, threw fifty ducats on the table and commenced to deal. We all took our places and the game began. Silvio was wont to keep the strictest silence upon such occasions, never discussing or explaining anything. If the punter chanced to make a mistake, he either paid up the balance immediately, or noted the surplus. We were already aware of this, and therefore never interfered. But of our number there was a young officer who had lately joined. He took part in the game, and in a fit of absence bent down one corner too many. Silvio took up the chalk and rectified the score as was his custom. The officer thinking he was mistaken, began to explain matters. Silvio continued dealing in silence. The officer losing patience, rubbed out what to him appeared unnecessary. Silvio taking up the chalk, again marked the score. The officer, excited with wine, and by the game and the laughter of his comrades, imagined himself cruelly offended, and in his passion, he lifted a metal candlestick off the table, and threw it at Silvio, who had barely time to evade the blow. We felt confused. Silvio rose, and with fire in his eyes said: "Please to walk out, sir, and thank your stars that this has happened under my roof."

We did not doubt the consequences; and we looked upon our new comrade as a dead man. He walked out, declaring himself ready to answer for the affront in such manner as the banker might elect. The game was continued for a few moments longer, but feeling how little our host's thoughts were in it, we left, one by one, and repaired to our quarters, discussing the possibility of a speedy vacancy.

When we met in the riding-school on the following day, we immediately inquired of each other if our poor ensign was still alive. When he himself appeared, we greeted him, putting the same question! He replied that he had heard nothing of Silvio as yet. This surprised us. We went to Silvio, and found him in the yard, sending bullet after bullet into an ace of cards, which he had fixed to the gate. He received us as usual, and did not allude to the event of the preceding evening. Three days elapsed, and the ensign still lived. We ask in astonishment: "Can it be possible that Silvio will not fight?" Silvio did not fight. A very slight explanation satisfied him, and peace was restored.

Such conduct might have injured him excessively in the estimation of youth. The want of pluck is what young men excuse least, for they generally consider it the highest of human virtues—one that covers a multitude of sins! However, little by little, all was forgotten, and Silvio regained his former influence.

I alone could not become reconciled to him. Being naturally of a romantic turn of mind, I had, more than anybody, attached myself to the man whose very existence was an enigma, and who appeared to me to be the hero of some mysterious event. He liked me, at least it was with me alone that he laid aside his usual cutting, ill-natured observations, and that he conversed upon various subjects with perfect good nature and rare pleasantness. But I could not subsequently to that unfortunate evening, rid myself of the idea that his honor had been tarnished, and that it was his own doing that the stain had not been removed. This thought prevented my feeling towards him as I had hitherto done, and I felt ashamed to look upon him. Silvio was far too clever and too shrewd not to notice this and not to divine the cause. He appeared hurt, and I fancied that I had more than once detected a wish on his part to come to an understanding with me; but I avoided each opportunity, and Silvio withdrew. Thereafter, I only met him in the presence of my comrades, and our former intimacy came to an end.

The busy inhabitants of a capital can have no conception of the many excitements so familiar to those who live in small towns or in villages—for example, the looking out for the periodical post-day; on Tuesdays and Fridays our Regimental Office was crowded with officers; some expecting remittances, some letters, and some newspapers. Letters and parcels were opened on the spot, news communicated, and the office presented the most animated appearance. Silvio's letters were addressed under cover to our regiment, and he was therefore usually present. Upon one of these occasions a letter was handed to him, the seal of which he broke with a look of the greatest impatience. His eyes brightened up as he perused it. The officers were themselves too much engaged to notice anything. "Gentlemen," said Silvio, "circumstances require me to leave without delay; I go this night, and hope you will not refuse to dine with me for the last time. I expect you, also," he continued, turning to me; "I expect you without fail." With these words he hastened out, and we shortly dispersed, having agreed to meet at Silvio's.

I arrived at the appointed hour, and found nearly the whole of my brother officers. Silvio's moveables were all packed, and little remained but the bare and battered walls. We sat down to dinner; our host was in high spirits, and his cheerfulness was soon participated in; the corks flew incessantly, our glasses frothed and sparkled unceasingly, and we wished the traveller with all possible sincerity God speed, and every blessing. It was already late when we rose. While the caps were being sorted, Silvio, bidding everyone "good-bye," took me by the hand and detained me, just as I was upon the point of leaving, "I must speak to you," said he, in a low voice. I remained.

The guests had left; being alone, we sat opposite to each other, and silently began to smoke our pipes. Silvio was careworn, and there were

no longer any traces of his affected cheerfulness. The pallor of his sombre face, his sparkling eyes, and the dense smoke issuing from his mouth, gave him a truly demoniacal look. Several minutes passed away, and Silvio broke silence:—

"We may perhaps never meet again," said he; "I wish to have an explication with you before we part. You must have noticed how little I value the opinion of the world, but I like you, and I feel that it would prey upon me were I to leave an unjust impression respecting myself on your mind."

He stopped and began to re-fill his emptied pipe; I remained silent with lowered eyes.

"You thought it strange," he continued, "that I did not demand satisfaction from that tipsy fool R—. You will doubtless own that the right to choose weapons being mine, his life was in my hands, my own being almost beyond the reach of danger. I might ascribe this forbearance to pure generosity, but I will not deceive you. Had it been in my power to punish R— without risking my own life in the least degree, I would by no means have let him off."

I looked at Silvio in surprise, and was completely taken aback by such a confession. Silvio went on:—

"That's just it. I have no right to imperil my life. I received a box on the ear six years ago, and my enemy still lives."

My curiosity was thoroughly awakened. "You did not fight him?" asked I. "Circumstances probably parted you?"

"I did fight him," answered Silvio; "and here is the memorial of our duel."

Silvio rose and took out of a hat-box a red cap ornamented with a gold tassel and braid (what the French would call *bonnet de police*); he put it on; it had a hole about an inch from its edge.

"You know," continued Silvio, "that I served in the — Hussars. My disposition is known to you. I am accustomed to take the lead, but in my early days it was a passion. At that time practical jokes were in fashion, and I was the greatest scamp in the whole army. We prided ourselves upon our drinking powers: I outdid the famous Bourzoff, whom Denis Davidoff has sung.\* Duels took place constantly in our regiment. I took a part in all of them, either as a witness or as a principal. My comrades idolised me, and the regimental commanders, who were constantly changing, looked upon me as an unavoidable evil."

"I was thus quietly (that is, turbulently) enjoying my popularity, when their joined us a wealthy youth, a member of a well-known family, (I do not wish to mention names). Never in my life have I met such a favoured child of fortune! Imagine to yourself, youth, talent, good looks, the most exuberant cheerfulness, the most undaunted courage, a high-sounding name, wealth to which he knew no bounds, and you will form some idea of the impression his presence produced among us. My pre-eminence received a check. Dazzled by my reputation, he would have sought my friendship, but I received him coldly, and he turned from me without any show of regret. I began to hate him. His success in our regiment and in the society of ladies threw me into complete despair. I sought opportunities for a quarrel, but my epigrams were answered by epigrams, which always seemed to me more unexpected and more stinging than my own: they were of course immeasurably more lively. He was facetious; I was vicious. At last, upon the occasion of a ball given by a Polish gentleman, seeing that he was the object of attention of all the ladies, and especially of the hostess herself, who was an ally of mine, I whispered to him some grossly rude remark. He warmed up, and gave me a box on the ear. We flew to our swords. The ladies fainted; we were separated, but that same night we drove off to fight a duel."

"The day was breaking. I stood at the appointed spot, attended by my three seconds. I awaited with inexpressible impatience the arrival of my opponent. The sun had already risen, and its rays were gathering heat. I observed him in the distance. He was on foot, in uniform, wearing his sword, and accompanied by one second. We walked on to meet him. He approached, holding in his hand his cap, which was full of cherries. Our seconds proceeded to measure twelve paces. I was to have fired first, but my rage was so great that I could not rely upon the steadiness of my hand, and to gain time, I conceded to him the first shot. My opponent would not consent to this. It was decided that we should draw lots; he, with his usual good luck, won the toss. He aimed, and his ball went through my cap. It was now my turn. His life was in my hands at last. I looked eagerly at him, trying to detect even a shadow of uneasiness. He stood covered by my pistol, selecting the ripest cherries out of his cap, and spitting out the stones, which nearly reached me as they fell. His coolness exasperated me. What is the use, thought I, of depriving him of his life, when he values it so little? A wicked thought flitted across my mind. I dropped the pistol. 'You are not thinking of death now,' said I; 'you prefer to enjoy your breakfast; I do not wish to disturb you!' 'You do not disturb me in the least,' replied he, 'please to fire away;—but, by the way, that is just as you please; your fire remains with you; I am always ready and at your service!' I turned to the seconds, declaring I did not intend to proceed at present, and thus our meeting ended."

"I quitted the service, and retired to this

\* A cavalry officer whose drinking powers and bravery have been immortalized by the warriort poet, Denis Davidoff (temp. Alexander I.).—The



place. But not a day has since passed without a thought of vengeance. Now my time has come . . . . .

Silvio drew out of his pocket the letter he had that morning received, and handed it to me. Somebody (probably the person entrusted with the care of his business matters) wrote word to him from Moscow, that a certain individual was soon about to be united in lawful wedlock to a young and beautiful girl.

"You guess," said Silvio, "who is meant by this certain individual. I go to Moscow. We shall see whether he will meet death as coolly on the eve of his marriage as he once awaited it at his meal of cherries!"

Silvio rose at these words, threw his cap upon the floor, and paced the room to and fro like a tiger in his cage. I had listened to him in silence; strange and conflicting feelings had taken possession of me.

The servant walked in and reported the horses ready. Silvio pressed my hand warmly; we embraced each other. He took his place in the *telega*, wherein lay two boxes, one containing his pistols, the other his necessities. We bade each other good-bye once more, and the horses were off.

## II.

Several years had elapsed, and my private affairs necessitated my settling in a poverty-stricken little village in the district of N—. Though occupied with the duties of landlord, I could not help silently sighing after my former rascally and reckless existence. I found it so difficult to get accustomed to spend the long dismal spring and winter evenings in such complete seclusion. By chatting with the mayor, or going over new buildings in progress, I managed somehow to drag through the day, up to the dinner hour; but I literally knew not what to do with myself at dusk. I had read the limited number of books which I had found on the bookshelves and in the lumber room until I knew them by heart. All the stories which the housekeeper Kirilovna knew had been told me over and over again. I grew weary of listening to the peasant woman's songs, and might have had recourse to sweet liquors, but that they made my head ache; and I confess that I feared I might become a drunkard from a feeling of wretchedness, that is to say the most wretched of drunkards, of which I saw a number of instances in our district.

I had no near neighbours, if I except two or three of these wretched fellows, whose conversation consisted chiefly of hiccoughs and sighs. Solitude was more endurable. At last I decided upon going to bed as early as possible, and upon dining as late as possible; in this way I contrived to shorten the evenings and add to the length of the days, which I spent in useful occupations.

Four years from me lay a very valuable estate belonging to the Countess B—; it was occupied by the agent only; the Countess had visited it but once, and that in the first year of her marriage, when she had not stayed over a month. During the second year of my seclusion, rumors were current that the Countess and her husband were coming to spend the summer. They really did arrive at about the beginning of June.

The appearance of a well-to-do neighbor is an important event to rustics. Landlords and tenants speak of it for two months previously and for three years subsequently. I confess that, so far as I was concerned, the presence of a young and beautiful neighbor seemed a matter of considerable importance to me. I burned with impatience to see her, and betook myself therefore after dinner, the first Sunday subsequently to their arrival, to pay my respects to their excellencies, as their nearest neighbor and most devoted of servants.

A footman showed me into the Count's library and went to announce me. The spacious apartment was furnished with the greatest possible luxury; the walls were lined with bookcases, each of which was surmounted by a bronze bust; over the marble chimney-piece was placed a large mirror; the floor was covered with green cloth and spread with carpets. Having lost all habits of luxury in my poor retreat, and having long since ceased to be familiar with the effects produced by the riches of others, I became timid, and awaited the Count with a certain trepidation, like a provincial petitioner expecting the approach of a minister. The doors opened, and a handsome man of two-and-thirty came in. The Count approached me with frankness and friendliness. I endeavored to muster courage and to explain the object of my call; but he anticipated me. We sat down. His easy and agreeable conversation soon dispelled my awkward shyness; I had already resumed my usual manner, when suddenly the Countess entered, and my perturbation became greater than before. She was beautiful indeed. The Count introduced me; I wished to seem to be at my ease, but the more I tried the more awkward did I feel. My new acquaintances wishing to give me time to recover, and to feel myself more at home, conversed together, dispensing with all etiquette, thus treating me like an old friend. I had risen from my seat in the meanwhile, and was pacing the room inspecting the books and pictures. I am no judge of paintings, but one there was which specially attracted my attention. It represented a landscape in Switzerland; but I was struck, not by the beauty of the artist's touch, but because it was perforated by two bullets, one hole being just above the other.

"This is a good shot," said I, turning to the Count.

"Yes," said he; "a very remarkable shot. Do you shoot well?" he went on.

"Pretty well," I replied, overjoyed that the conversation had turned upon a subject of interest. "I mean I could not miss a card at thirty paces; of course, when I know the pistols."

"Indeed," said the Countess, with a look of great attention; "and you, my dear, could you hit a card at thirty paces?"

"Some day," answered the Count, "we shall try. I was not a bad shot in my time, but it is now four years since I held a pistol."

"Oh," remarked I, "that being the case, I do not mind betting that your excellency will not be able to hit a card at twenty paces even: pistol shooting requires daily practice. I know this by experience. I used to be considered one of the best shots in our regiment. It so happened once that I had not touched a pistol for a whole month: my own were undergoing repair, and will your excellency believe it, when I took to shooting again, I missed a bottle four successive times at twenty paces? Our riding-master, a sharp, amusing fellow, happening to be present, cried out: 'I say, old boy, thou canst not lift thy hand against the bottle, eh?' No, your excellency, it is a practice that ought not to be neglected, if one does not wish to become rusty at it. The best shot I ever happened to come across practised every day, and would fire at least three times before dinner. This was a rule with him, as was his glass of vodka."

The Count and Countess appeared pleased at my having become talkative.

"And what kind of a shot was he?" asked the Count.

"Of that sort, your excellency, that if he happened to see a fly on the wall... You are smiling Countess. But it is true, indeed... When he chanced to see a fly, he would call out: 'Koska, my pistols!' Koska brings him a loaded pistol. Bang! and there is the fly, flattened to the wall!"

"That was wonderful," said the Count. "What was his name?"

"Silvio, your excellency."

"Silvio!" exclaimed he, jumping up; "you knew Silvio?"

"Knew him? Of course, your excellency. We were friends; he was considered by the regiment as being quite one of ourselves; but it is now five years since I heard anything of him. Your excellency appears also to have known him?"

"I knew him—knew him very well. Did he ever relate a very strange occurrence to you?"

"Your excellency cannot possibly mean a box on the ear, which some young scamp gave him at a ball?"

"And did he name that scamp to you?"

"No, your excellency, he did not; but,—your excellency," continued I, the truth beginning to dawn upon me,—"I beg your pardon—I was not aware—can it be yourself?"

"I, myself," answered the Count, with an exceedingly perturbed countenance, "and the perforated picture is the reminiscence of our last meeting."

"Oh! pray, dear," said the Countess, "pray do not speak of it. I dread hearing the story."

"No," replied he, "I shall relate the whole of it. He knows how I offended his friend, let him now also know how Silvio took his revenge."

The Count bade me be seated, and I listened with the liveliest curiosity to the following recital:—

"I was married five years ago. The first month, the honeymoon, was spent in this village. It is to this house that I am indebted for the happiest, as also for one of the saddest moments of my life.

"We were out riding one evening; my wife's horse became unmanageable; she got frightened, gave me her bridle, and set out homewards on foot. I saw upon entering the stable-yard a travelling telega, and was informed that a gentleman, who had refused to give his name, and had simply said that he had some business to transact, was waiting for me in the library. I entered this room, and in the twilight saw a man covered with dust and wearing a long beard. He was standing by the fire-place. I approached him, trying to recall to mind his features. 'Thou dost not recognise me, Count,' said he, with trembling voice. 'Silvio!' exclaimed I; and I confess I felt my hair stand on end! 'Yes, it is I,' he continued, 'the shot remains with me: I have come to discharge my pistol; art thou ready?' The pistol protruded out of his side pocket. I measured twelve paces, and stood there, in that corner, begging him to fire quickly, before my wife returned. He hesitated, he asked for lights. Candles were brought in. I shut the door, gave orders that no one should come in, and again begged him to fire. He took out his pistol, and proceeded to take aim... I was counting the seconds... I thought of her... One dreadful minute passed! Silvio let his arm drop. 'I regret,' said he, 'that my pistol is not loaded with cherry stones... The bullet is heavy. This appears to me not a duel, but murder; I am not accustomed to aim at an unarmed man; let us begin anew; let us draw lots who is to have the first fire.' My head swam... I suppose I was not consenting... At last another pistol was loaded; two bits of paper were rolled up; he placed them in the cap I had once shot through; I again drew the winning number. 'Thou art devilish lucky, Count,' said he, with an ironical smile I can never forget. I do not understand what possessed me, and by what means he forced me to it... but I fired—and hit that picture there."

The Count pointed to the perforated picture; his face was crimson, the Countess had become

whiter than her handkerchief; I could not suppress an exclamation.

"I fired," the Count went on: "and, thank God, missed. Then Silvio... (he looked really dreadful at that moment) Silvio aimed at me. Suddenly the doors opened, Masha rushed in, and with a scream threw herself on my neck. Her presence restored to me all my courage. 'Darling,' said I, 'don't you see that we are joking? How frightened you are! Go and take a glass of water and come back to us; I shall introduce an old friend and comrade to you.' Masha still doubted. 'Tell me, is what my husband says true?' said she, turning to the sombre Silvio, 'is it true that you are both in fun?' 'He is always in fun, Countess,' replied Silvio. 'Once upon a time he gave me a box on the ear, in fun; in fun he shot through this cap; in fun, he just now missed me; now I have a fancy to be in fun also.' So saying, he was about to take aim... before her! Masha threw herself at his feet. 'Get up, Masha, for shame!' I exclaimed, enraged; 'and you, sir, will you cease jeering at a poor woman? Are you, or are you not, going to fire?' 'I am not going to,' answered Silvio, 'I am content. I have seen your hesitation, your timidity. I made you fire at me. I am satisfied. You will remember me. I leave you to your conscience!' Here he was about to take his departure, but stopping in the doorway, he looked at the perforated picture, fired his pistol at it, almost without aiming, and disappeared. My wife had fainted; the servants dared not stop him, and looked at him with terror; he walked out, called the *famstchik* and drove off, before I had even time to recover myself."

The Count concluded. Thus did I learn the ending of a story which had so interested me at its commencement. I did not again meet its hero. It was said that at the time of the revolt under Alexander Ypsilanti, Silvio commanded a detachment of the Heteres, and was killed in the combat before Skullenli.

## AUNT LORA'S LONG AGO.

I was visiting Ireland and my great-aunt for the first time. Her lovely home, Glenbawn, nestled at the base of one of the Wicklow mountains—Sugarloaf. It was the winter of 1867-8, and all our neighbors of note had moved into Dublin, driven from the lonely hills by the terrors of the Fenian movement, which was the one engrossing topic in every mouth and with every class.

I had come over to Christmas with auntie, as my father had been obliged to leave unexpectedly for the West Indies—a hurried journey, on which it was inexpedient for me to accompany him; so our London home was shut up and I was consigned to the care of his Irish aunt, of whom I had often heard, but whom I had never seen. She had welcomed me lovingly: we had held a consultation on my first arrival at Glenbawn, and had decided on biding at home in auntie's own cosy nest amid her home duties, rather than spend an idle winter in unhomelike lodgings in town; so I settled down as contentedly as might be to wear away the months which lay between me and my father's home-coming.

We had pleasant talks in the long evenings when the curtains were drawn, the turf-fire heaped up with an oaken log in its ruby heart, its ruddy glare striving with the soft steady light of the wax candles which burned in old silver branched candlesticks on every table and bracket in the pretty quaint drawing-room. Aunt Lora's tiny but stately figure, with its rich black silk and delicate laces, the soft silver hair rolled back and almost covered by a cloud of lace fastened by large diamond pins and floating far below her waist. She was simply lovely, and I used to look up at her from my pet lounge on the soft white rug with the passionate admiration of a girl for the first realization of her ideal woman. To me—insignificant brown mouse that I was—with all her seventy years she seemed perfectly beautiful.

One night we had talked a long while of the foolish Fenians—of the sad story of poor, lovely Ireland, with her desolate cabin-homes and exiled children; then it was she told some bits of her long ago.

"I was born," auntie said, "in the terrible '98, when the rage and hatred which had smouldered for years among the Irish peasantry burst into a flame which enveloped and scorched the whole country-side. Centuries of misrule had laid the train; measures of repression—necessary, it may be, but certainly severe, nay, cruel—applied the spark. The *habeas corpus* was suspended; government spies lurked on every side; the horses of the poor farmers were impressed for baggage transport; the concurrence of seven magistrates was sufficient warrant to consign to the Fleet, almost without even the form of a trial, any numbers of persons found at unlawful assemblies; soldiers were billeted without the least pretence or regard as to right or justice, and the conduct of the yeomanry was in too many instances aggravating beyond measure. I have heard the story of those days from my mother—your great-grandmother, darling. My father lodged a whole regiment of yeomanry here in this old house, with its outbuildings. Looking back in quiet after-years it seemed to me like a dream too weird and dreary to have been more than a dream—the quiet homestead filled with armed men, the kindly country sounds silenced; in their stead the clash of arms, the angry voices of men ready and eager to meet death, so that with it they found

revenge; the lurid glare of the rebel beacons lighting up the soft summer-night landscape; the ceaseless tramp and tumult of a camp; the terrible rumors which floated, it seemed, on the very airs of heaven; the news brought in by disguised scouts of the burning, by the rebels, of Scullabogue Barn, crowded with three hundred prisoners, whom they flung back in the flames when they did manage to escape through door or window; the capture of the mails in different parts of Ireland, the burning of the coaches when the bags were secured, the murder of the passengers and guards; the wild excesses of Father Murphy in the south, whose house and chapel the soldiers had burned down; he had vowed a fearful vengeance, which he had begun on the dreadful 23d of May by setting fire to the house of every Protestant in the little town of Killeormick and murdering the owners. May had its catalogue of horrors; they were to be surpassed by the massacres which took place during June in the rebel camp on Vinegar Hill, but the horror reached its climax with the murders on Wexford bridge. I will not dwell on this, dear, but will tell you that late one evening towards the end of June, a weary, blood-stained, wounded fugitive crept in here with the news. The tale he told maddened the soldiers, even the tender heart of my father hardened against the torturers of some of the best and noblest men in Ireland, many of them his own loved friends. There was a hurried call to arms, a midnight march, from which there was to be no home-coming for him and for many beside. He was colonel of the regiment, and rode off with set face and gleaming eyes which never softened, even as he kissed good-by to wife and child—my sister Meg, your grandmother—I was not born then. Three days—a long, hot, breathless agony of suspense for poor mother—did not bring him back; with the dawn of the fourth came the heavy tramp of armed men; her weary eyes, which had not closed since she had looked her last on her husband, watched a band of rebels march sullenly down the hill beside the house, looking neither to left nor right, speaking no word, leaving a broad crushed track as they went through the dew-hung corn, the rosy dawnlight glinting on their pikes stained with dull crimson, on the wide black banner, with its blood-red cross and motto, "Murder Without Sin." They passed down the valley and away, and still my mother watched. At last there came the well-known uniforms over the winding road, but without my father. He had left them three hours before to ride across a bog, a short cut to home—it was not possible for the soldiers to cross it in a body. His brother officers had tried to dissuade him; but, laughing at the idea of risk and anxious to relieve my mother's fears, he rode off, never to be seen again in life but by his murderers. Weary as they were, a detachment was at once sent off to commence a search which lasted till nightfall, when, lying naked and disfigured in a deep bog-hole, they found a body. My mother's loving eyes alone recognized in one poor maimed hand that of her husband. That night I was born."

"But, auntie, knowing all this, how can you love these people, live amongst them, help them, as you do—the children of your father's murderers?"

"Lora, the wrongs of centuries had maddened them. My mother lived six lonely years after that summer morning when her heart was broken. In life and death she taught us the lesson of forgiveness. No, the terrible excesses of '98 are more easily condoned than the horrible cold blooded murders of later years—cowardly, cruel!—the shooting of the defenceless from a hedge-shelter."

"Shall I tell you another story? You have heard of your Aunt Mabel; from the time of your grandmother's death she had been my child and darling; your father was in Demerara, and we were alone in the world but for each other, and we were very happy together. She married at eighteen; her husband was an Englishman, a younger son, not rich; he had been in the army for a few years, but sold out on his marriage and bought a farm on the other side of the valley. My wedding gift to them was their new home, it was a mere farm-house which I will bought it; but during their wedding tour, which lasted for six months, and which they finished by a round of visits amongst his people in England, I had the whole house remodelled and enlarged, made into a fitting home for my pet. How I enjoyed furnishing it, remembering all her pretty whims and fancies!"

"It was a bright home-coming. With what pretty glee Mabel ran from room to room, delighted with everything I had done for her; then the pretty shy grace with which she took her place as mistress. One little happy week passed, to which I shall always look back as the last of real happiness in my life. You know, dear, I am happy now and content, as an old woman should be whose life is warmed by the loving kindness of every one around her, who has been given the abiding joy, which never grows insipid, of being able to brighten other lives with some of the brightness given to her own. And then there is the best and dearest joy of all—the knowledge that the loves of long ago are kept safely in God's own care; to be mine again one day—very soon now—when I too reach the world where the incompleteness of this will be rounded and perfected."

"But this little week was happy and warm with joy of another kind which I have missed ever since. It was Christmas eve. All day my darling had been busy with decorations and preparations for the next day, when all the tenants on the new estate were to be entertained in the servant's hall."

"Well, dear, I remember coming down th-



afternoon. I had been busy writing in my own room; I found the whole house a bower of greenery, the last touch given, and Mabel and her husband resting before the fire in the hall, whose cedar wainscot sent out ruddy gleams and spicy fragrance in acknowledgment of the light and warmth. She smiled up at me from a nest of skins, among which she was cosily lounging, resting her bright head against Will's knee, and held up two pretty dusty hands to be exclaimed at.

"We were talking of last Christmas," she said, when I had taken the chair Will drew forward for me. "How long ago it seems, and how strange that then we did not know each other! Will scorching in India, you and I Christmasing at Glenbawn, auntie. Oh, I wish I could give you those eighteen years, Will. It is so dreary to think you were not in them."

"You will give me the next eighteen, and many a year beside; that will content me, little wife. I am sure you were a mischievous monkey, and I am thankful I did not discover you until Aunt Lora had tamed you."

"You wicked, unsentimental boy!"

"And the dusty hands were twisted in a thick brown beard which was temptingly near; and so they laughed and chatted, children as they were, quite unchecked by my presence, until a servant came in with a message for me. It was news of the sudden illness of one of the servants here. My first impulse was to come home without delay; but they would not hear of my doing so. It was settled that Will should drive over, calling for the doctor as he passed through the village, and if he did not bring a good report he promised to take me back immediately on his return, if I would consent to wait patiently so long. I consented—would that I had not! All might have been—but no; there are no might have beens with God."

Aunt Lora covered her face for a minute, then she went on more steadily.

"I remember all—every word and incident of that evening. We watched Will drive away into the gray twilight and then came back to the fireside until the dressing-bell rang, while my pet used every loving wile to keep me from dwelling too anxiously on McCarthy's illness. We grew anxious, as the evening went on, for my servant; Will's prolonged absence made me fear she was seriously ill. Now and then the young wife shivered a little as the fierce blast, which now at intervals swept up the valley, with one sudden gust rushed by to die away among the higher hills. It was the snow-wind, we knew it well and longed that our travellers were safely home. Mabel had ordered dinner in her morning-room, from which there was a view of the road along which he would return; she thought, too, it would be easier to warm and brighten it than the large dining-room. We stood for a long while at the window watching the heavy woolly clouds rolling and massing themselves in the livid sky; there had been a light fall of snow in the morning, enough to whiten the trees and grass, but we could distinguish the dark line of the road as it wound round into the valley. Again and again the wind swept up with its wild angry moan, bending the trees in its course and hiding them in thick clouds of snow-powder swept from their tossing branches; then again the din would hush and a great stillness fall on the outside world. We watched till I saw my child was growing pale, and I drew her into the warm room, bright with fire and candle-light, the pretty rose-colored room, where the shining silver and crystal of the dinner-table looked brighter still in contrast to the outer gloom. I pretended to be hungry that she might be forced to give up the watch for a while. We sat down to dinner, leaving the warmest seat for Will, and each tried to eat for the sake of the other; but at every gust the sweet little face opposite me grew whiter, and a dark line began to show beneath the soft eyes; as yet the worst we feared for Will was a struggle with the storm, while we sat at home wrapped from cold and all discomfort.

"The evening wore on; dinner was removed; the supper-table laid, covered with every dainty the little wife could suggest. She hunted up a fur-lined dressing-gown, which he had used when stationed in Canada, and hung it before the fire; then she went back to her post beside the window, having warmed the hearth and spread the table, all for Will—poor Will, who should never more enjoy food or warmth in this world.

"Lights were placed in every window to guide him through the snow, which was now falling blindingly, darkening sight and hushing sound. Servants were sent out with spades and lanterns; but unhappily the butler was old and feeble, and the only other man at our disposal was Will's soldier-servant, an Englishman, quite ignorant of the neighborhood. They returned without having been able to get farther than where the road divided at the head of the valley.

"As the small hours crept by, the cold grew intense outside the circle warmed by the fire. I tried to wrap Mabel in a mantle, but she put away my hand impatiently, and shook herself free from the soft folds.

"I will not be warm. Will is cold."

"And she turned to the window once more with a slight shudder, while her weary eyes gazed on into the whirling blinding snow-fall.

"At two o'clock I again tried to induce her to lie down, telling her what I tried to believe myself, that her husband had stayed weather-bound at Glenbawn; that Brown Colleen, the mare he had taken, could find her way home to her stables on the darkest night; that—in short, I used every means—coaxing, remon-

strance, command, all in vain; words she did not seem to hear. When I tried to draw her away she pushed me gently from her, and the white lips moved, though no sound came from them.

"At three o'clock the wind lulled, the snow-whirl ceased. I was holding her burning hand in mine, longing intensely for morning, turning with a sick shudder from the pictures which would pass before my aching brain of Will sleeping his last sleep beneath the drift, when suddenly she snatched away her hand and started up.

"He is coming! I hear him!" She flew into the hall, where an immense fire was blazing on the hearth. "Throw on the yule log!" she cried impatiently to the servants who were standing about. "Don't I tell you he is coming—he is here!"

"I signed to them to obey her, and the great pine trunk which had been carted home so merrily only a week ago, which she and Will had garlanded a few hours since, was flung on. I asked softly whether they heard anything; but the men shook their heads and indeed the depth of the snow must have hushed any sound. They said if their master had waited in shelter at the mountain foot till the storm subsided, the horse might make his way beneath the shadow of the rocks which overhung the road, and which must have kept a comparatively clear track.

"Mabel had gone back to her window. Now she rushed in, her face quivering and flashing with excitement.

"Auntie, he is here! I see him!"

"She began tugging furiously at the fastenings of the great door. Stronger hands came to her aid, in an instant it was flung open, and before any one could interfere she had rushed out, we saw the white flying figure flit over the snow like a wraith—snow-drift so deep and light that it seemed a bird might have sunk into it; we saw the dog-cart creeping slowly under the cliff at a foot-pace, Will's upright soldierly figure showing dark and clear against the livid background; we saw her reach him and spring up to him; then there was a silence. I do not know why we all looked on as at a scene in which we had no part, until a cry, low, anguished, exceeding bitter, laden with terror and heartbreak, cut through the head heavy stillness. I felt hands holding me back; I saw dark figures struggling across the white lawn; then something was carried in and laid on the soft furs before the blaze—something, not Will, never Will any more. The kind strong hands gave back no answering pressure to the cold clasping fingers which clung to them, the loving eyes had lost their light; he lay beside her as he had lain not twelve hours ago, on the same spot, in his own hearth-glow; but it was Will no longer. He was dead.

Something crueler and fiercer than the storm had been abroad that bitter night. He had been tempted from home to his death; the murderer had reckoned on his loving heart answering to the call of sorrow and sickness; the false message as to McCarthy's illness had been but a lure to draw the victim to the toils. He had set out on his return journey, dropped the doctor at his own door with a merry good-night, and driven away to his death; his murderer only knew the rest.

"His wife's white dress was covered with crimson stains when we raised her from her husband's body. She did not faint or cry; she even smiled, a faint weary smile.

"Will is so cold," she said.

"When we brought her wine, she put it to his dead lips.

"Will first—poor Will!" and even while she spoke her head fell again on his breast.

"All that night she clung to him with a clasp which we could not loose without using force, which I could not endure to do. We sent for the doctor; he made his toilsome way through the snow only to tell us what we knew too well already.

"Will was dead, and all night long his wife lay motionless upon his breast; great fires burned, table stood covered for the master, who was never to feel cold or hunger more. When the chill late winter morning broke, Mabel too had entered into the great eternal sunshine of God."

The next day Aunt Lora took me to the grave where wife and husband slept together. The moss, "God's blessing on the grave," had crept softly, greenly above them; the scarlet letters at the base of the white cross, which told the story of William Forsythe Long and Mabel his wife, gleamed redly through the holly wreath which hung there, a message of love and remembrance from the living to the dead.

No trace of the murderer was ever discovered; it was supposed to be one of those all but motiveless crimes which have desolated so many Irish homes during the last forty years. Mr. Long was an Englishman; he had begun his reign well—was full of schemes to benefit his tenantry. His crime was having taken the place of an Irish family, who had emigrated when a long career of extravagance had made it impossible for them to live at home any longer.

—Thomas Moore, the poet, observing himself to be eyed by two pretty young ladies, inquired of a friend who was near enough to hear their remarks, what it was they said of him. "Why the tall one said that she was delighted to have the opportunity of looking on so celebrated a personage." "Indeed," said the gratified little fellow; "and did she say anything more?" "Yes," she said she was the more pleased because she had taken in your celebrated alma-mack for the last five or six years!"

"IT'LL NEBBER COME NO MO."

BY F. G. DEFONTAINE.

It's bin watin long for do good old time  
Dat'll nebbber come no mo'  
When I use to rock, an' work' an' sing  
In the little cabin do.

My Sam was dar wid his fiddle,  
Po' Sam he's gone—done dead!  
Dead for de want of wittles an' clothes  
An' de shelter o'er head.

An' little Mose—well, he's dead too:  
How he use to dance an' sing,  
While Jim an' Polly an' all de rest,  
Went aroun' an' aroun' de ring.

O Missus—bless her gold ole soul—  
Would laff till her sides gib way,  
An' Massa'd stop at my cabin jist  
To say, "How's ole Mammy to-day?"

De boys—I mean ole Massa's boys—  
Dey lubbed ole Mammy too.  
Who nussed 'em eb'ry blessed one,  
Clean down to little Mas Loo.

Po' Mas Loo! He went to de fight,  
But he nebbber come back no mo';  
We hear dat he fall wid a ball in de breast  
In de front of de battle's ro'.

He'd put his arms aroun' my neck  
An' say, "Mammy, I love you so!"  
He didn't see no harm in dat,  
Do his Mammy was black an' po'.

Ole Missus died wid a broken heart  
When de las' ob de boys was killed,  
An' Massa bowed his head an' cried  
Dat his cup ob sorrow was fill'd.

An' here I'se sot, a watin' an' watchin'  
For de good time comin' no mo',  
An' I see ole Missus a callin' Mammy  
Across from de oder shore.

EVA.

IN THREE PICTURES.

I.

UNITED.

It was bright autumn weather; a merchant-vessel—a schooner of 120 tons—lay alongside the quay of a North-German seaport. The cargo had been shipped, and it was ready to sail the next high tide. All was quiet on board; some of the sailors were idly leaning over the bulwarks smoking, and others stood talking to men on the quay.

"When do you sail?"

"To-night, at eight o'clock."

"To what port are you bound?"

"To Brest."

"What have you on board?"

"Mixed cargo."

These and many similar inquisitive questions were asked and answered. In the meanwhile, the owner and captain of the vessel had been married, by Pastor Hartland, at the Lutheran church, to his Eva. A boy-and-girl attachment had ripened with their years; and, though her parents had insisted on their waiting, they had now been betrothed for some months. Eva was fair, with soft blue eyes, a laughing mouth, and gentle voice. Her figure was slight and bending. She did not look strong enough for the rough life she was going to share with her husband, Adolf Lempfert, but she had a brave heart and high spirit, which would help her to bear many a hardship. They had plighted their troth before God that morning, and the sun shone on them, as, beaming with happiness, they left the old church and walked to Eva's home, to partake of a parting meal with her parents.

Adolf Lempfert was a tall, quiet-mannered man, genial and kindly by nature, so that he was greatly loved by all, especially by his crew. He had been left an orphan at an early age, and when he began to fight the battle of life his means were small; but industry, a happy knack of turning a penny, and careful living, with but little self-indulgence, had realised for him a comfortable little fortune, to which the legacy of an aunt had lately added. At the age of thirty-five he was owner not only of a vessel, but of the cargo.

Eva's father kept a store-shop on the quay, not far from where the schooner was lying. He was a portly well-to-do German tradesman, with a sallow face and red moustache.

Eva's good mother, Frau Grenzmann, was the picture of a worthy housewife; careful, anxious, and bustling. She had many words of advice and warning to give Eva on this great occasion. She knew some of the perils and discomforts her daughter would have to encounter; indeed, the mother's heart had so dreaded these, that she had with difficulty been made to consent to trusting her child to the protection of Adolf. The warmth and constancy of his love had overcome all prejudices, however; and though Frau Grenzmann had at one time tried to influence Eva to give her hand to the son of a shopkeeper in their own town of Hafenwerth, her resolute

determination to wed no one but Adolf had made her parents give way; for they dearly loved their only daughter, and would do nothing to mar her happiness.

The back-parlor table groaned beneath the feast provided for this occasion; and many relations and friends were there to wish the young couple joy. Eva's own hands had prepared the greater part of the feast, and she had helped to set the table and deck the dull little room with flowers. It was rich autumn time, and plenty of cornfield flowers were brought into the market by country women, and many a bouquet had been presented to Eva, with best wishes for her happiness, for she was a general favorite. The feast was a merry one, but it had to be quickly followed by the parting. Tearfully and tremblingly the mother pressed her daughter to her heart.

"I do not grudge her to you, Adolf," she said, "but it is hard to part with her. Take care of her, and may God bless and keep you both!"

"I will make her as happy as I can, and she shall never want so long as these arms can work," said Adolf, embracing his mother-in-law.

"She'll make your cabin bright," said her father. "Would it were a good substantial house, such as mine. I would have done more towards the furnishing of it had it been so; but I've no faith in those walls of wood—a plank between you and eternity."

The old man shook his head in disapproval.

"Do not speak so sadly, father," said Eva, taking both his hands in hers. "You would not have me fear to share my husband's dangers? There is only one just fear that you have taught me to deem right—the fear of God. Give us your blessing, father, and pray for us when we are out at sea, that if it should please God for us never to return, we may at least be prepared to meet death, come where and how it may. Don't cry, mother. God can make the one plank father speaks of as safe a home as any on firm land. Let our motto be, 'Trust in God.'"

She kissed her hand to them both, then drew her arm within her husband's, and walked away hastily towards her new home. In one hand she carried a birdcage, half concealed by her shawl; a fluttering within showed that Eva's quick movements made it difficult for the occupant of the cage to retain its position on the perch.

The Prussian-merchant flag was flying from the mast of the schooner, and a shout of welcome greeted the pair. Nodding and smiling to the rough sailors, Eva hurried down the cabin-stairs into the little apartment which was to be her home. There she was to reign absolute mistress, there share her husband's joys and sorrows, be his helpmate, his companion, his joy.

"Do you like the cabin?" Adolf said, as he threw his arm round her waist.

Instead of answering his question she laughed merrily.

"It is so strange," she said, "but I daresay it will soon feel like home. Father has not chosen the furniture well for such a tiny place, but I will make it comfortable. Vögelchen's cage shall hang there, where the light falls."

And with Adolf's help she fixed the bullfinch's cage to a nail in the wall.

"Chee-aw!" chirped the bird, shaking its feathers, and taking a side look at everything, as if it found the place as strange as its mistress did.

"You will feel at home here soon, my beauty," said Eva, addressing it. "We are going to be as happy as the day is long. Chirp away, while I take off my things and set all to rights. Now, Adolf, go you to your men and prepare for the voyage. When you come down again you will see such a change here;" and she pushed him merrily away with both her hands.

When he was gone safe out of sight and hearing, she flung herself into a chair and cried for a few minutes as if her heart would break. She was happy and miserable at the same time. Had she not torn herself from a tender mother's love, from a happy home, and had not the light-hearted days of youth come to an end for her? An untold future was before her, and who could penetrate its mysteries? "Trust! Trust!" said Eva to herself. "Did I not say that was to be my motto? And so it shall be." With this resolve she choked down her tears, sprang up, and began to busy herself in unpacking a small deal box, which contained her personal treasures. Out came pictures, a stained-wood work-box, and the portraits of her parents and husband. She looked about for a place to hang these treasures, and kissed each one as she placed them against the wall. Then she clapped her hands, as a child would have done, with pleasure at the home-like change in the appearance of things she was making. With a loving hand she took out a volume of the *Imitation of Christ*, her Bible—the gift of her mother—and a book of German hymns, besides a bound edition of Schiller's poems, and some of Wildermuth's stories. One by one she placed them on a shelf, which had a bar in front to prevent the books falling out in rough weather, and greatly did they add to the cheerful look of the tiny cabin. A place was found for a store of seed and sand for the bullfinch, and some groundsel and plantain were put in water, that her pet might enjoy the luxuries of life as long as possible. It took Eva a long time to think over the arrangement of her things, to unpack some of her clothing and store it in drawers; so that the shades of evening were beginning to fall, when she determined to go on deck and take a last look at the town and quay, and watch the preparations

It is the bride's part in Germany to furnish the house.



for starting. The lamps were being lighted, and their reflections quivered in the water. The masts of the vessels near stood out dark against the soft sky; whilst, farther off, masts and trees and houses were shrouded in blue evening mist.

"Good-bye," whispered Eva, as she strained her eyes to distinguish the outline of her old home — "good-bye, childhood, land, dear old father and mother! When I come back I shall be a great deal older." She had never been absent before, and months appeared like years to her at that moment.

A group of men were seen approaching the vessel, and, when close to it, they stopped and waved their caps, breaking forth into a rich part song, a well-known serenade. They were some of Adolf's old friends come thus to wish him good speed. Eight o'clock struck, the vessel was set free from her moorings, there was a shout from the singers on the quay, a sail was hoisted, and slowly the schooner gained the mid-channel, and was towed away down the river to the open sea. The lights and the sounds of voices faded; there was nothing left but the ripple of the water and the noise of the steam-tug's paddles.

Presently the moon rose, looking like a great red ball till it emerged from the mist and shone forth clear and bright on the sparkling sea. Such a night as this was a most favorable one for their start, and there was no lack of hope in the young pair. Eva could not then realise that there was anything to dread on the ocean, which heaved and lapped around their vessel almost lovingly.

A fortnight passed away. Unromantic though it sounds, Eva had been sea-sick, had recovered, and had already formed her habits to her new life. Cooking, tidying, washing, mending, and knitting were her chief occupations. Very hard she found them, till she got her "sea-leg," and learned the art of balancing herself. When she was at work, her bullfinch used to sit on the back of her chair, and they would sing and talk to each other, and fight and play. The bird had felt the change, and was moped in the cabin at first; but the companionship of his mistress, and the almost constant liberty he was allowed, reconciled him to life on board ship. Dompfaff was a clever bird; he could pipe several tunes when in the humor; when sleepy, he would sing first a snatch of one air, then another, mixing merry and sad together in a strange jumble. Sometimes, when sitting on the lid of the work-box, he would try to call Eva's attention by piping a merry tune and leaving off suddenly with a jerk, turning his head on one side, and flashing his bright eye at her. This behavior never failed to make his mistress pretend to fight with him, poking at him with her finger, whilst he took up a warlike position on the box-lid, with outstretched wings and open bill. Once, when this game was going on, the bird's excitement and the motion of the vessel caused the lid of the workbox to shut, and Dompfaff found himself roughly perched upon the table. On all occasions when he was frightened he sought protection on Eva's shoulder, and would nestle against her cheek.

Sea-life is monotonous when all goes well. The fair wind speeding the vessel on, the gently-rolling waves, the broad expanse of sea and sky, the regular routine of duty, have a peculiar monotony of their own, to say nothing of the weariness of a calm or the sojourn of a week or so in some sheltered roads, wind-bound, each day hoping to see some sign of change.

When excitement does come, it is in such a painful form—so sudden, so petrifying. Then every nerve must be strained, the judgment kept clear and calm, and the action must be prompt.

Adolf Lempfert was very decided in his orders, and he had a commanding manner when giving them, which always gains respect. He was considerate of his men, and when he could, he associated pleasantly with them.

## II.

## PARTED.

Time rolled smoothly on; the schooner, the Sea-Nymph, had made several successful voyages. Everything had prospered so far with the Lempferts in a worldly point of view, everything but Eva's health. The clear pure air of the sea, so beneficial to some persons, seemed to be too keen and penetrating for her. She thrived well at first, while the warm weather lasted, though no sun, no wind could bronze her cheek. The cold winter tried her, and the cruel easterly gales of the spring brought on a cough, which she endeavored to hide from her husband, for fear of causing him anxiety. A transparent pallor settled on her cheeks, and her strength failed. She fought against her growing weakness; she forced herself to work as usual, but what had been pleasure was now pain.

Eva was sitting at dinner one day with her husband in their little cabin. She had scarcely eaten anything, for she had made up her mind that she ought to tell him she was not well, and the dread of giving him pain had deprived her of the power of eating.

"Adolf," she began with a great effort, "I've been thinking that perhaps a month or two off shore might set me up. Much as I should grieve to see you sail without me, I think—" She stopped, for a choking in her throat prevented speech for a few seconds. "It would almost break my heart," she added hurriedly.

"Do you think that it is the sea that makes you ill, Eva?" he said, bending towards her, and fixing his large gray eyes on her face. "We

shall be home in a fortnight, and then you shall have a rest with your parents. Why did you not tell me this before you started on our last voyage?"

"I had not the heart to say anything. Besides, I thought that what I then felt might only be a passing illness, and change would do me good; but there is something very wrong with me, I fear, Adolf." She took his hand. "Did you say it would take a fortnight to reach home?"

"Not less than that; and the wind must keep fair for us, you know."

"A fortnight seems a long time to me, Adolf. Why should it do so? I've never known a day's weariness till now. I must be ill, and yet I cannot say what ails me. If I hurry up the cabin-stairs, I feel as if I must drop upon the deck, and my heart beats as if it would burst. What can it be?"

"Have you felt this long?"

"Ever since that stormy night in the winter, when the wave burst in upon us and drenched us as we lay in our births. I thought sea-water never hurt any one; but the damp gave me a chill that night from which I have never recovered. I seem to have become worse gradually, so gradually that it is difficult to mark the time when this or that sensation first began."

"And you never told me!" he said reproachfully.

Eva said nothing, but rose and threw her arms round him, pressing her lips to his forehead. Their hearts were full. The excitement was too much for Eva. She raised herself, and pressed her hand against her side, uttering a little exclamation of pain. Adolf supported her to a chair, for she was nearly fainting, and her breath came with difficulty. By degrees the paroxysm passed off, and she rested her head against him.

"I hoped I should be so strong," she said, "such a strong useful sailor's wife; but it is God's will that I should have this cross to bear; and, Adolf, if— if it should please Him to take me, you will not repine very much; you will feel that a sickly wife would have been a sad burden to you, and then you will be able to rejoice that your Eva should be at rest, and—"

She caught sight of the agonised expression of her husband's face, and said no more. The little bullfinch flew from its cage, nestled in her breast and piped her favorite tune. Eva smiled.

"I am better now; I shall be quite well soon. Place my birdie back in his cage, and then let me have air. It is air I seem to be always craving for, and yet it perishes me."

The bird was safely placed in his cage and the cabin-door thrown open. A rush of keen spring air came down, for the wind was blowing fresh from the north-west.

"I am better now," said Eva. "You can safely leave me." Seeing that he hesitated to do so, she added more emphatically, "Indeed I am much better now."

Adolf's heart was too full for words. He knew that his wife was not well, he had guessed it by the pallor of her cheeks and the restless light in her eyes; but it had never occurred to him that she was really ill, and she had hid the more serious symptoms from him. The truth was now confessed, and it seemed to stun and crush him. He rushed up the cabin-stairs to the deck; his eyes were blinded by tears that welled up from a heart filled with a nameless dread. The sunshine had no power to soothe him. The sparkling sea danced, and his brave little vessel seemed before the wind, now cutting through the waves, now arising buoyantly over them; but he took no pleasure in the sight. A brief half-hour had completely changed him, had crushed all his hopes. The brightest flower of his life seemed withered in his hand, and he could not at that moment bow his head in resignation to God's will. His men wondered what could have moved him so much; but they had not long to wonder—the truth was soon apparent to all. Eva sat motionless in the cabin, her head resting in her hand. She was glad that her husband knew how ill she was; it was a relief to her to feel that she had told him all, though the effort had cost her a good deal, and she had dreaded giving him pain.

"It was right that he should know," she thought. "For might not this be the beginning of the end?"

The issues of life and death are in the hands of One who never errs; but how near that end might be she could not know. In her prosperity, with her heart swelling with joy, had she not said her trust was in God; and now that trouble was nigh, should she cease to trust in Him? No, no. And with thoughts such as these struggling with her grief, she earnestly prayed that "God's will might be done."

Time passes slowly when the heart is heavy, and when the mind is anxiously bent on an event to come. She longed to be on shore, to see her parents once more; and the days seemed like months, and still she was rapidly growing worse. With no doctor to consult, she could apply no remedies, at least only such as her instincts suggested.

Adolf sometimes murmured; but she would not let him do so.

"If I had the best doctor in the world, he could not cure me; I feel sure of that. Thank God, I do not suffer pain; only this strange fluttering of the heart, and this longing for air. If I should never reach the land, you will go at once to see father and mother, and tell them all? Do not let them think that I pined away for home; I have loved the sea as much as any sailor could. You will take care of the bullfinch for my sake, will you not? He sings so sweetly;" and she turned her eyes towards the cage.

"Do not speak so hopelessly, Eva," said her husband. "We must be within two days' jour-

ney of port; and when we get you on shore the doctor will set you to rights, and you will feel better when you can have rest."

"I shall have rest in that land which has no shore, Adolf dear, above where the bright stars shine. Read me that beautiful hymn on eternity. I love it so well. I always think the words express wonderfully that timeless existence, the immensity of which we poor mortals cannot grasp."

Adolf took up her favorite book of German hymns, and read it in a clear sad voice. As he read, he seemed to catch some of the rapture which Eva felt, and when he had ceased reading he stooped down and kissed her, murmuring:

"God knows, I do not grudge you that bliss."

He said no more; but hurried away with a heart well-nigh breaking.

The next day Eva could not rise from her berth; for several hours she was convulsed with pain so distracting, that in spite of all her endeavors she could not help an occasional moan. This pain left her as suddenly as it came, but in such a state of exhaustion that every moment seemed as if it might be her last.

The little bullfinch sat on her pillow uttering low plaintive notes. He seemed to know that his mistress was ill, and that he might lose her. Close by her stood Adolf, not knowing what to do.

"Pray," murmured Eva.

And he knelt and prayed words of agonised entreaty for her recovery. She looked at him anxiously.

"Not that," she said; "but God's will be done."

She had scarcely uttered the words when a tremor ran through her frame.

"More air," she gasped; but ere Adolf had time to throw open the cabin-door her spirit had fled to its home.

A cry of agony burst from his lips as he threw himself on his knees beside the lifeless form; the little bird flew from the pillow and nestled in his breast. The end had come.

That evening the sea was very calm, and the sun set in gorgeous colours; it was such a sunset as can only be seen at sea, where breath and space reign. Adolf stood gazing at it, and the glorious scene filled his mind with thoughts of eternity and rest. It seemed to draw him nearer to the spirit that had fled; for the beauty of nature fills the mind with a joy which oftentimes seems a foretaste of those purer joys which have no end. After the vivid colors of sunset have faded there is a soft peaceful glow ere twilight falls. The radiant sunshine of his life had indeed set in deep sorrow; but the after-glow of peace in resignation was his.

If the will and life be ruled by God's law, outward circumstances cannot disturb such a peace as this; and though the buoyant joy of youth must set, the calm of a well-ordered mind may succeed ere twilight deepens into the night of death.

The Sea-Nymph lay at anchor outside the port of Hafenwerth. The captain had signalled for a steamer to tug her into the harbor. He forced himself to perform all necessary duties, and his mind was set on having his Eva buried in the pretty cemetery outside her native town. The sad news had to be broken to the poor old parents. Frau Grenzmann wrung her hands in mute despair; her husband muttered something about his never having liked the sea, and then he buried his head in his hands and wept.

"To think that Eva, the young and happy, should die before him! Why was it so?" he cried within himself; and a voice seemed to answer, "God knows best."

Adolf told them all that Eva had said. He spoke of her resignation and her peaceful end, which comforted them not a little.

A simple cross was placed over her grave in the cemetery, and in the church where she had prayed from childhood a brass was inserted in the wall, upon which was a scroll supported by a spike of white lily. On the scroll was written:—

EVA LEMPFERT,

Died April 9, 1864, trusting in Jesus.

## III. ALONE.

Adolf Lempfert had only to work for himself now, and bravely he fought with the low spirits, which naturally strove for the mastery over him. At first he could hardly bear to look at the little bullfinch, and seldom let it out of its cage. The well-known tunes sent a pang to his heart every time the little bird began to pipe, and he would throw something over the cage to make it cease. The bird was determined, however, that he should like it, and tried by every means in its power to ingratiate itself into his favor; by degrees it succeeded, and Adolf grew to be very fond of it, as he would have said, "For Eva's sake."

The bullfinch sat on his shoulder when he ate his food, and pecked seed from his mouth. As soon as he appeared in the cabin, it would show signs of the greatest joy, and flap its wings and cry "chee-aw." It was a pretty sight to see the strong weather-beaten sailor fondling his little bird. His men joked about it, and sometimes thought his mind had become a little crazed since his wife's death; but it was not so.

Next to his bird Adolf loved his vessel. Gallantly had the Sea-Nymph weathered many a gale, and with close-reefed sails had run before the wind on many a rough night. He felt

more secure on board her than on shore, when the wind blew hard, threatening to blow down chimneys, roofs, and trees. Her deck was his little kingdom; there he ruled supreme. He often thought how his fortune was linked with, and how he must, as it were, swim or sink with her.

A time of trial was drawing near. It was the autumn of 1864. There had been dirty weather for some days and nights. First driving rain and wind, then calm and fog, succeeded by squalls, which had driven the Sea-Nymph far out of her course in the English Channel. The night was dark, and thick with rain, which the wind in its violence blew horizontally over the sea. A blinding drenching rain. Everything was tightly fastened on deck, for as sailors term it, they were threatened with half a gale of wind, and the sea was becoming rougher in the open channel every moment.

No warning lights could be seen, and Adolf anxiously glanced at the compass and consulted the charts in his cabin. He mistook the position of the vessel entirely, and fancied they were near the French coast, whereas they were off the Kentish shore, and every moment drifting nearer some dangerous sands, which have been the destruction of many a fine vessel. These sands stretch out into the sea in a long line. At high tide, vessels of a certain tonnage can pass over them; but when the tide runs out, the sands in some places are left hard and dry. Floating lights have been placed at intervals to warn vessels at night, but in thick weather even their bright revolving lamps cannot always be seen, and in this instance they gave no warning to those on board the Sea-Nymph.

Adolf new not that his brave schooner was making straight for the south sands, till the sudden ominous cry of "Breakers ahead!" roused him.

"Put her about!" was the order given. Not a moment was to be lost, for there were the white-crested waves tossing and roaring in front and to the left of them. The wind howled in the rigging, making the vessel totter, whilst the waves, sweeping her deck from stem to stern, washed away one boat and stove in another. It was an awful moment; the men held their breath as they did their duty. Would the Sea-Nymph clear the dangerous sands which threatened her destruction? The wind beat wildly, and the hull of the vessel seemed lost in the trough of the sea. Above the deafening roar of the elements was heard the dull grating noise of the keel driving upon the sand. The wind seemed to utter a shriek of triumph, and then to whirl away, muttering in weird whispers.

Adolf's heart sank. "Was this the end?"

To fire a signal of distress was the work of a very few minutes; and then every hand was wanted to keep the vessel in such a position that she should not feel the full fury of the winds and waves. The prow was fast in the sand, but the stern was free.

Cutting through the darkness not far ahead a rocket was seen to go up and shower its sparks of fire high up in the air, though the wind had driven it far from the place whence it had been sent up. The Sea-Nymph's signal had been heard on board the light-ship; there was hope for the shipwrecked crew if the vessel would hold together till help arrived.

Only those who have experienced a storm at sea can tell the deadened careless feeling which creeps over any one long exposed to its fury. Now that all hope of saving the vessel seemed lost, despair took possession of Adolf. He could not pray; he cared not what happened to him, his fortune, all were at the mercy of the waves; and what was life to him? Suddenly he resolved never to abandon the Sea-Nymph; he would cling to the last spar that held together. His men, he hoped and prayed, would be saved. He could pray for them, but in that dreadful moment he could not pray for himself; his heart was stern and cold.

Time went on; moments felt like years, so painfully did the mind hang on seconds, waiting and watching. The crew were wet through, benumbed, yet resolute, and all eyes strove to penetrate the darkness, to discover some signs of approaching rescue from their peril. At one time it appeared as if the vessel could not hold together till help from shore came. The wind carried away the top mizen-mast, tearing tackle and cord as if it had been mere thread.

Many a vessel had gone to pieces on those sands ere help could come; all hands perishing, and no token of the destruction left, save, weeks afterwards perhaps, a piece of goods washed ashore, the spoiled remnant of some gallant ship's cargo. One more violent gust of wind beat against the Sea-Nymph, and tore and shook her as if in fury, then whirled away disappointed; but the storm had reached its height, and from that moment it abated its violence: the rain ceased, the waves though rough were not so dangerous, and there seemed hope for the shipwrecked crew once more. Adolf ordered another signal of distress to be made, and soon afterwards came the joyful sound of "Boat ahoy!"

Some brave men had been found ready to risk their lives in the attempt to save others from a watery grave, and a lifeboat was approaching the Sea-Nymph. Danger, however, was by no means over. The vessel heaved and rolled, and the surf upon the sands prevented any boat from venturing very near. After two failures a rope was thrown from the lifeboat and caught by the men on board the Sea-Nymph. A communication being thus secured, the question arose who was to leave the vessel first. The men urged their captain to do so, but this he resolutely refused, saying he would be the last to leave.

"Life is dearest to the youngest," he added,



"Let the youngest go, and so on, by turns, till all have left the ship."

This order was obeyed, and one by one the crew found themselves in the lifeboat. The captain and mate remained to the last. The latter entreated to be left, but Adolf would not hear of it, and gasping his hand, said:

"Go, and may God bless you! Pray for me." There was something in the tone which made the man hesitate to obey, and he gazed in his captain's face, trying to read its expression, though the darkness prevented his seeing anything but the outline of his features. His entreaties to be left to the last were in vain; and as the shouts of the men in the life boat were becoming more eager and impatient, he embraced his old captain impetuously, and with tears streaming down his cheeks he followed the rest.

"The cry of 'Safe!' resounded loud enough for Adolf to hear, and when he heard it he deliberately unfastened the rope, and cast from him the chance of life. It was a wrong and wilful act, a tempting of God's providence; but Adolf was not himself at the time; he was worn out by fatigue and wild with despair. There was a shout of entreaty from the lifeboat, but he replied that he was ready to die. He bade them save themselves, and think no more of him.

The shout of voices died away; the darkness hid all but the white foam of the breakers, which still roared and tossed around, though the wind was hushed. Adolf Lempfert was alone; the only living creature was Eva's bird in the cabin. He went for it, he wrapped his greatcoat around him, fastened the birdcage to his body and enveloped it with this thick coat; then he ascended the foremast, and when he gained the highest point, he lashed himself firmly to it, so that no rolling of the vessel or blast of wind could cast him adrift on the waters. Thus he waited for death; and as a drowning man is said to review his whole life in the space of a second, so now the past came before him with all its vivid joys and sorrows. He thought of Eva, of her death-bed, of her faith, and the words "Trusting in Jesus" shot through his brain. Was he not tempting God? Had he not thrust a chance of life from him? and dark though his life seemed, had he a right to choose between death and life? Was this not the act of suicide? Too late to repent then, too late, he feared; but as he hung there a fervent prayer ascended to heaven for mercy. A chill feeling crept over his limbs, his eyes closed, and there was a roaring sound in his ears which was not the sound of the breakers; then his head drooped upon his chest, and he became unconscious.

There was a flood of rosy light over the wide expanse of sky, it deepened in intensity, and then the sun rose above the horizon of waters. The scene which its light disclosed was in strong contrast to the storm of the previous night. A breeze skimmed the gently-rolling sea, and who would have thought that those playful billows had such powers of destruction in them?

There was the light-ship, one of the three which guard the sands, and near it could be seen a black speck rising out of the waters. A boat was fast approaching this object, and sailors on shore were watching. Through their telescopes they could see all that took place. The boat seemed to halt; there was excitement amongst the sailors, a great deal of talking, and many conjectures. Each one wanted to take a look through the telescope; there were some foreigners amongst them, who seemed more eager than the rest. Then the boat was seen returning, and the watchers on shore grew more impatient, but it was some time before the boat came near enough for them to discover what was in it. When it did, they saw the form of a man lying at the bottom, his head supported by another man. It took but a few seconds to reach the landing-place, and there the foreigners hastened; one of them was able to speak a little English, for he was eagerly questioning the boatmen as soon as they touched the shore.

"Is he alive?"  
"We think so, but he is not conscious."  
Then the story was told of how they found the body of Adolf Lempfert hanging to the mast; the vessel had sunk, but the foretopmast had remained above the water, and to it the body was lashed. It was touching to see how the crew tenderly gathered round their old master, and when one discovered that the birdcage was fastened to him and the bullfinch was not dead, the man burst into tears.

Everything was done to restore consciousness, and by degrees warmth and life returned. The crew and captain of the Sea-Nymph were taken to the Sailors' Home. There they remained till they could be sent back to their own country. Every kindness was shown them, and subscriptions raised for their temporary relief. Adolf walked about with the bird on his wrist. The little thing did not seem to have suffered from its exposure. When questioned about it he would smile sadly, and say it was the only thing he had left in the world. This, though at the time it seemed true, was not quite the case, and when he returned to Germany he found that his insurance covered the greater part of his loss. We will not follow his fortunes farther, but we may add that the near approach of death caused him to think more seriously of religion, and thankfulness at having been preserved that fearful night made him more earnest in his endeavor to prepare for the great change which must come to all.

Some of the cargo and a few planks and spars washed on shore was all that remained of the once-gallant schooner, but her memory was dear to her master; and another black mark added to the wreck chart of that dangerous coast, and another honor recorded of the crew of the life-boat.

### CAISSA'S CASKET.

SATURDAY, Feb. 14th, 1874.

\* \* All communications relating to Chess must be addressed "CHECKMATE."

#### SOLUTION TO PROBLEM No. 37.

By T. D. S. MOORE.

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| White.           | Black.            |
| 1. Q to K 2nd    | 1. Any move       |
| 2. Q checks acc. | 2. R takes Q mate |

#### SOLUTION TO PROBLEM No. 38.

By H. F. L. MEYER.

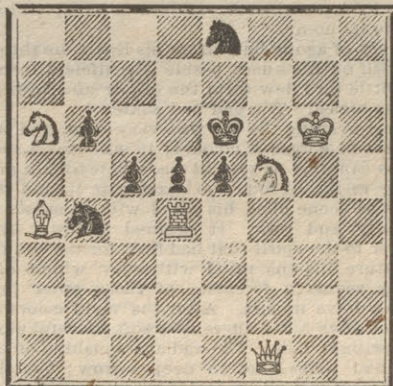
- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| White.               | Black.        |
| 1. Q to K B 1st      | 1. P moves    |
| 2. B to Q B 3rd (ch) | 2. K to R 6th |
| 3. Q to B 8th mate   |               |

No. 38 is said to be "pretty and difficult" by "Delta" who sends us the correct solution.

#### PROBLEM No. 45.

By DR. S. GOLD.

BLACK.



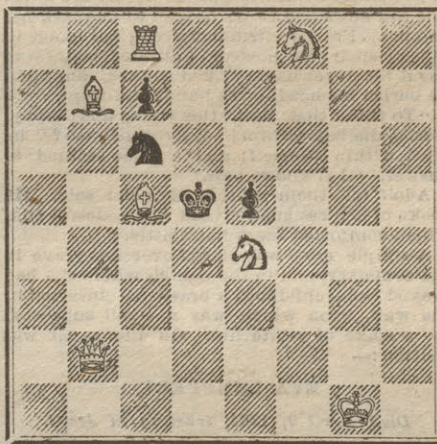
WHITE.

White to play and mate in two moves.

#### PROBLEM No. 46.

By S. TYRRELL.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

#### OUR PROBLEMS.

Our readers will find the problems we give this week exceedingly difficult, especially the three-mover, which we think one of the finest we have had the privilege of studying for some time. How many of our solvers will succeed in getting the solution?

#### CHESS.

The elections are over. Now for Chess. Let the FAVORITE continue to be the favorite still. We have done our best toward making this department of the FAVORITE interesting, and we are assured by not a few encouraging words received from correspondents that we have to a gratifying degree succeeded. How many of our readers enjoy our Chess column? How many of those who find pleasure in examining CAISSA'S CASKET are willing to lend us a helping hand to increase its popularity? From all of these we should like to receive solutions and criticisms regularly and problems as often as possible.

### PAUL TEMPLAR.

A PROSE IDYLL.

BY EDWARD JENKINS.

Thirty years ago!..... And now as the wild, grey sky is fast glooming to utter darkness, and the ragged clouds, urged on by the mad North-East wind, are hurrying across the smooth face of heaven, and I feel all the chill and depression of the dying hour of day falling upon my soul,—I bring to memory this night thirty years ago. A night so light to this one—as wild, as cold, as joy-killing, with just such a grey-clouded, harsh-breath'd sunset, the sun unseen, its heat unfelt, and all Nature shuddering because the Angel of the North had wrapped it in his deadly embrace.

The Shadow of that night hath ever since been round me: I have dwelt in it, walked in it, worked in it, and out of it have been evolved, for good or evil, all the issues of my life.

Thirty years ago, this November day, I, Paul Templar, son of a Yorkshire farmer, living far up near the Durham border, inwards a mile or two from the great eternal rocks that breast the waves of the Northern sea, had wandered to some familiar caverns, deep under the jutting cliffs, where I loved to sit and hear the sea bellying through the resounding vaults, or hearken to the curlew's scream, or watch the scurrying gales as they whirled past thick and misty—while through and above it all rolled the ceaseless noise of the distant waves, murmuring in their deepest tones and clapping their hands to God.

A queer, bookish fellow was I, not overloyed of my father, who strengthened his hands and loins to win his bread, and little cared for my idle fingers and mooning brains about his house. But he had to yield to the necessity of my laziness. I was deformed in the shoulders, and my pale face marked me out as a weakling, from four brawny, Herculean youths who were the pride of our homestead. How much they four loved and pitied me! How gentle were they to their "gentleman brother," as they used to call me—given to books and lounging, while they worked hard and sweatfully, tending and forcing the fitful, often too thankless, soil, under the invidious sky.

My mother was dead—died in bearing me. Noblest of these noble brothers was the eldest. I see him now, Harold, with his great ruddy face, the broad forehead, and the curly auburn hair, and the brown eyes, deep and lustrous, and the well-knit, massive form.

I see too that fair girl he brought from Devon, whither he went to serve his farm apprenticeship, flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, coral-lipped beauty that she was, and so tender and fragile, our big folk for a while looked at her with gentle awe, knowing not what to do with her or how to entreat her. As if some rare Dresden vase had fallen into the hands of brutish hinds, who recognized only its beauty, not its use, and cherished it fearfully, with a feeling something between worship and wonder.

Fondly did I love Eva, with a pure brotherly love—and more fondly still I loved Eveline, the double image of her father and mother, the pet of all our hearts.

And it is of these two, that, recalling the events of this night thirty years ago, the bright, fair figures stand out to my eyes as real as at the time, against that background of grey and black and stormy eve. O bright, fair figures, long since translated and transfigured, where my eyes can no more behold your beauty!

The morning had risen as glum and cold as the evening afterwards went out. Fast drove the steel-shaded clouds, harsh was the voice and angry the breath of the wind. A sort of day I loved much, when I could get down on the shore behind some rock, and shelter myself from the chilling blasts. Eva intended to go to N—, a town twelve miles off, down in a little vale, that carried a small stream to the sea, where a few houses and fishermen's huts sheltered a community quaint and quiet; living mostly on the trade done with the surrounding thinly-populated district. Part of the way was over a hill, nearly four miles from our house, and along its top, where it was scarped away in a huge Titanic break straight down to the sea. Great rocks jutted out here and there, and many a cave and fissure pitted its black face; below was a pavement of tremendous fragments strewn and piled with the strengthful abandon of Nature, among which the high tide surged and boiled and hissed. Over this hill, down again to a valley and then along the shore round the next headland went the road to N—.

They had promised Eva the light, two-wheeled cart; and Eveline, who was to have a new dress, the main object of the journey, was to accompany her. A farmer's wife thinks little of such an excursion, and though the giants humorously warned Eva, at breakfast, of the roughness of the day, they never thought of dissuading her from the drive. I offered to go with her as far as the cliff, about four miles, taking with me my dinner and some books, and to await her return in the early afternoon. So Harold brought round the cart, with the patient old mare, and lifted in Eva and Eveline, and last of all, in the wantonness of strength, me, amidst jokes and laughter. And away we went.

I wandered about above and below, and by and by sat down secure in a favorite cave, reached by a path from the top, which only a

light body and cunning hands and feet could safely use. My eyes, weary with reading, had been resting sleepily on the weird, troubled scene beyond; my ear had been lulled by the thunder of the waves on those glistening rocks. I knew not the hour, but I was so intimate with Nature, I felt sure that Eva should long since have been with me on her way home.

Twice had I gone out and struggled up to the highest point of the cliff, whence I ought to have seen her cart climbing the hill. After noon the weather had grown colder, angrier, and more gloomy. Grand indeed were the waves, with their tossing manes of snowy foam under that black sky.

As I descended the second time disappointed to my cave, I saw, with alarm, the north and east growing more desperately dark—the clouds quickened their speed to a riotous rate—and the drizzle blew cold and hard upon my face.

"Coom, Eva!" I said, "coom along soon, Eva and Eveline. Storm and night are behind ye. Coom on safe and speedily, my darlings!"

By and by the storm drove up fell and furious. O how the monster sea lashed out and roared again! The scouring drifts of rain dashed past my cave's mouth and flung their cold drops back into my face as I shrank to the farthest end.

"Nay," said I, peering out anxiously, "God save thee, Eva. Mayst thou not leave the shelter of the cosy haven till this be over?"

I grew uneasy. There was danger now, so vicious was the gale, in climbing even the few feet between me and the top; but, after waiting vainly a long time for a lull and finding that the air grew darker and darker, the storm more fierce, I braved my heart for another effort and went up again.

Whirl—whirl—what a gust! It nearly blew me off my feet. I stood as manfully as I could, and tried to make out the line of road. I could not see a hundred yards. The mist and rain and falling darkness veiled every feature of the landscape from my sight. I listened trembling.

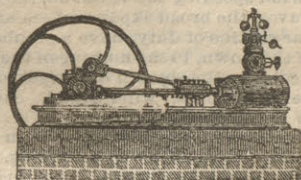
"God help thee!" I cried; "Oh! where art thou, Eva? O little Eveline, evangel, where are now thy little face and feet, the sunshine and the music of our home?"

At this moment I heard a shrill cry coming through the storm. It was a sea-mew surely? It seemed not far from me, and it was sharp and so inhuman.

There it was again! And now another..... fainter, sweeping by my ears on the loud-voiced wind. I breasted the storm down the hill, shading my eyes with my hand from the blinding drift, and pressing on desperately with a strength I was unconscious of. Two hundred yards—and I heard the shriek again, more subdued, but this time quite close to me. Yet I could see nothing in the road. It was certainly the cry of a child.

"Good heavens! Am I bewitched? It is in my ear. Eva! Eveline!"

(To be concluded in our next.)



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